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From ideas to final mandate

An analysis of the process of formulating the Norwegian TRC mandate and the idea systems at play

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Abstract

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) have increasingly become a tool for non-transitional stable democratic states to deal with injustice committed in the past, however often with lingering consequences. This was the case when in 2018 a TRC was established by the Norwegian Parliament to investigate the Norwegianization policy and injustice against the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finnish peoples. In 2017 the Norwegian Parliaments Presidium invited the Sámi Parliament and three Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations to consult on formulating the mandate for a Norwegian commission to investigate the Norwegianization and injustice against the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finns in Norway. It is the documents produced by these actors during this period, as well as the final mandate itself, which are at the centre of this thesis. Research on TRC's tend to focus on the TRC processes and outcomes, and less attention has been put towards TRC mandates, both what they contain and who makes them. Thus, this thesis will first examine the mandate with an emphasis on how the final mandate defines the term reconciliation. Furthermore, this thesis will examine the documents produced during the mandate formulation process through document analysis, and an analysis of ideas and ideological content, and asks: to what degree can the idea systems concerning reconciliation presented by the Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF during the mandate formulation process be found final mandate? And in what ways did these three institutions/organisations have idea systems and goals that were similar or dissimilar? The aim of this thesis is to identify the different ideas at play during the mandate formulation process, with a focus on reconciliation, and assessing to what degree these ideas can be traced in the final mandate. Additionally, relevant theoretical perspectives concerning reconciliation will be utilised to inform the discussions of the idea systems found.

Abstrakt-Norsk

Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjoner har i økende grad blitt et verktøy for stabile demokratiske stater, som ikke er i overgang fra vold til fred, til å håndtere urettferdighet begått i fortiden, men ofte med langvarige konsekvenser. Dette var tilfellet da det i 2018 ble opprettet et Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjon av Stortinget for å granske fornorskningsspolitikk og urett ovenfor samer, kvener og norske finner. I 2017 inviterte Stortingets Presidentskap Sametinget og tre kvenske/norskfinske organisasjoner til å konsultere i utformingen av mandatet for en norsk kommisjon for å granske fornorskningen og urettferdigheten mot samene og kvener/norskfinner i Norge. Det er dokumentene produsert av disse aktørene i denne perioden, samt det endelige mandatet, som står i sentrum for denne oppgaven. Forskning på Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjoner har en tendens til å sette søkelys på kommisjonsprosessene og resultatene, og mindre oppmerksomhet har blitt gitt til mandatet til slike kommisjoner, både hva de inneholder og hvem som er med på å utforme dem. Derfor vil denne oppgaven først undersøke mandatet med vekt på hvordan det endelige mandatet definerer begrepet forsoning. Videre vil denne oppgaven undersøke dokumentene som er produsert under mandatformuleringsprosessen, gjennom dokumentanalyse, og en analyse av ideer og ideologisk innhold. Oppgaven vil så spørre: i hvilken grad kan man finne idésystemene om forsoning som var presentert av Sametinget, NKF og KLF i løpet av mandatformuleringsprosessen i det endelige mandat? Og på hvilke måter hadde disse tre institusjonene/organisasjonene idésystemer og mål som var like eller ulike? Målet med denne oppgaven er å identifisere de ulike ideene som var i spill under mandatformuleringsprosessen, med søkelys på forsoning, og vurdere i hvilken grad disse ideene kan spores i det endelige mandatet. I tillegg vil relevante teoretiske perspektiver angående forsoning bli brukt for å informere diskusjonene om idésystemene som er funnet.

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Clarifications of terms and abbreviations

NFF: Norsk-Finsk Forbund/Norjalais-Suomalainen Liitto.

In English: Norwegian Finn Association

NKF: Norske Kveners Forbund/Ruijan Kveeniliitto.

In English: Norwegian Kven Association.

KLF: Kvenlandsforbundet.

In English: The Kven Land Association. This organization changed name in 2020/21 to Kvensk Finsk Riksforbund. English: Kven Finn (National) Association. Except for the discussion of suggestions about reconciliation measures in 2023, the organisation will be referred to by the abbreviation of the name it had at the time, KLF.

Stortingets Presidentskap:

In English: The Norwegian Parliaments Presidium.

Sametinget/Sámediggi:

In English: Sámi Parliament

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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1 Introduction

On the 12th of June 2018, the Norwegian Parliament voted to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The full name of the Norwegian TRC in English is “The commission to investigate the Norwegianization policy and injustice against the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finnish peoples (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission)”.¹ The task of the TRC is to examine the Norwegianization policies and injustice committed against the Indigenous Sámi and the national minority Kven/Norwegian Finns.² The tasks of the TRC mandate are threefold: The TRC is to map the history of the Norwegianization policies enacted by the state authorities towards the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finns, to investigate the impacts of these policies today, and finally to propose measures for continued reconciliation (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen. (n.d.).

The Norwegian TRC’s foundation for its process and work is grounded in its mandate, and it is the process of formulating this mandate which is the focus of this thesis. The Sámi Parliament, and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations Norske Kveners Forbund (NKF), Kvenlandsforbundet (KLF) and Norsk-Finsk Forbund (NFF) were invited to consult in the process of formulating the TRC mandate and its composition in the period from December 2017 to June 2018.³ I propose that it is useful to have a further understanding of the mandate, whose ideas can be found in the mandate, how the mandate came to be, and what it did not become, especially when the final report is submitted and measures for reconciliation are proposed on the 1st of June 2023.

By first analysing the final mandate, this thesis will examine how the Norwegian Parliaments Presidium, who authored the mandate, understood the term reconciliation within the mandate. Secondly this thesis will analyse the documents produced by the Sámi

¹ In Norwegian: «Kommisjonen for å granske fornorskingspolitikk og urett overfor samer, kvener og norskfinner (sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen)».

² In 2020 the TRC chose to include the Forest Finns to the TRC process as well.

³ Some information about these key actors: The first Sámi Parliament election was held in 1989, the Sámi Parliaments president during the mandate formulation process was Aili Keskitalo (NSR). NKF was established in 1987 and according to their website has over 1200 members today. Hilja Lisa Huru was the leader of NKF between 2016 to 2020, in 2020 Kai Petter Johansen was elected as the leader of the organisation and represented the NKF during the open hearing on the 6th of March 2023. KLF was established in 1999 and I have not been able to find anything on how many members there are of the KLF. The leader in 2018 and now is Bjørnar Seppola.

Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations during the mandate consultation process, asking the following research questions: To what degree can the idea systems concerning reconciliation presented by the Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF during the mandate formulation process be found final mandate? And finally in what ways did these three institutions/organisations have idea systems and goals that were similar or dissimilar?

This thesis has also evaluated to what degree other prominent ideas suggested by the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations are reflected in the final mandate.

This thesis has utilised document analysis, and qualitative analysis of ideas and ideological content, as defined by Mats Lindberg, to answer the research questions. By analysing the documents produced by the Norwegian Parliament, the Sámi Parliament, and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations during the process of formulating the TRC mandate the thesis aims at answering these research questions. Furthermore, by applying the analytical framework of analysis of ideas and ideological content with a focus on the term reconciliation, this thesis aims to explore what ideas the different actors had about reconciliation. In conversation with relevant theories concerning the reconciliation within TRC processes the findings will illustrate how there were different idea systems at play during this particular process. In addition, this thesis will shortly touch upon reconciliation in 2023. This is because the TRC held a hearing on the 6th of March 2023 for the purpose of gathering suggestions for measures for further reconciliation. The Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations contributed at this hearing, thus the contributions from the hearing will be referenced in order to examine if it is possible to detect any changes in the actors' ideas on reconciliation from 2018 to 2023. The data from the hearing will be discussed in conversation with the findings related to idea systems on reconciliation.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 TRC's in an international context

TRC's have become a popular tool, on an international level, to deal with the past. TRC's overall vary in scope, budget, mandates, and contexts, from transitional regimes such as in South Africa, to that of non-transitional democratic states, such as Norway. Pricilla B. Hayner (2010) has reviewed numerous commissions in an international context, most of which are in the context of transitional regimes. The most relevant context for the Norwegian case are TRC's which have been established in non-transitional context, and which focuses on

Indigenous peoples or minorities. The Canadian TRC was as stated above, one of the relevant TRC's which was mentioned in the proposal for the Norwegian commission. The Canadian TRC process lasted from 2007 to 2015 and was focused on the legacy of the Indian Residential School system and was focused on offering an opportunity for those affected by the Indian Residential School system to share these experiences. In addition to submitting a report, the Canadian TRC also recommended 94 so called calls for action, which aimed at promoting reconciliation, and a National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation was established.⁴ Greenland has also had a reconciliation commission, however without any involvement from Denmark. A TRC concerning the Sámi people is ongoing in Finland at the moment and in Sweden there are currently two commissions working; one Sámi truth commission which has just started and a TRC concerning the Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalauset, that will submit its report in November 2023.⁵ These are all examples of TRC processes initiated in non-transitional democratic states which, save one of the examples, have been aimed at dealing with the past injustices against Indigenous peoples.

1.1.2 The Norwegian TRC

From the mid-19th century to around the 1960's, the Norwegian authorities targeted harsh assimilation policies, termed "Norwegianization policies" towards the Sámi, and Kven/Norwegian Finns. These policies were enacted through several state structures, in particular through the education system, where many children were sent to boarding schools away from their families. One of the aims were to extinguish the Sámi and Kven languages (Minde, 2003, p. 76). There is no doubt that the harsh assimilation policies had and still has an effect on the people it targeted. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to delve further into the assimilation policies directed towards the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finns, but it is useful to keep in mind that it is this history and its legacy is the main focus for the Norwegian TRC.

The idea of a commission to investigate the Norwegianization policies was first promoted to the Sámi Parliament by the political party Árja in 2014. In May 2015, the Sámi Parliament expressed the need for a public inquiry and mapping of the Norwegianization policies and their consequences, using the term "truth commission", in a letter to KMD

⁴ A link to the Canadian TRC's website: <https://www.rcaanc-cimac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525>

⁵ For the two Swedish commissions see: Komisuuni.se, [Sanningskommissionen för det samiska folket](http://Sanningskommissionen_för_det_samiska_folket) (sanningskommissionensamer.se)

(Saugestad, 2009, p. 9) (Sametinget, 2015, p.2-3). Further, the need for a truth commission about the Norwegianization is mentioned the Sámi Parliaments yearly report from 2016 (Sametinget, 2016, p.99).

However, an internal note exempt from public access from June 2016, was exposed by NRK in the end of March 2017 (Schanche&Paulsen, 2017, n.p).⁶ This note showed that the Norwegian Government wanted to avoid an investigation into the Norwegianization policies. The note stated that “If the state in cooperation with the Sámi Parliament establish a commission which documents the consequences of the Norwegianization, it will lead to expectations of measures.” (Schanche&Paulsen, 2017, n.p). And that it might “...create great expectations of a similar mapping for the Kven/Norwegian Finn minority...” (Schanche&Paulsen, 2017, n.p). Another of the suggestions from this internal note was that the Sámi Parliament establish a commission, despite the same note also stating that the Sámi Parliament probably would not be able to finance such a commission (Larsson, Idivuoma, Gaup, Hætta, 2017).

Nevertheless, despite this reluctance within the right-wing government at the time, two representatives from SV (socialist left party), Kirsti Bergstø and Torgeir Knag Fylkesnes successfully put forward a proposal for a truth commission to look into the Norwegianization policies and injustices committed towards the Sámi and the Kven/Norwegian Finns in the Norwegian Parliament in December 2016 (Representantforslag 30 S (2016–2017)). On the 15th of May 2017, the Norwegian Parliaments control- and constitution committee invited to an open hearing on the proposal, where representatives from twenty-nine organisations, institutions, municipalities, political parties etc. were heard. At the hearing, only one of the participants, NFF, was against the establishment of a commission.

In on the 20th of June 2017 the proposal from Bergstø and Fylkesnes was followed up in the Norwegian Parliament and was passed by a majority vote.⁷ Thus, the Parliament motioned the Norwegian Parliaments Presidium to “...prepare a proposal for a mandate for the commission, its name and composition.” (Innst. 493 S (2016–2017)). The motion also argues that this be done in cooperation with the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations (Innst. 493 S (2016–2017), p.5).

⁶ NRK: Norwegian National Broadcaster.

⁷ Only Høyre (The Conservative Party of Norway) and FrP (The Progress Party) voted against. That FrP voted no is perhaps no surprise, as the party actively works to dismantle the Sámi Parliament.

It is this period and process which is of interest to this thesis. The Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations were invited to consult in formulating the mandate for a Norwegian commission to investigate the Norwegianization and injustice against the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finns in Norway. They were first invited to a meeting with the Presidium on the 15th of December 2017, subsequently in 2018 draft mandates were sent out on hearing for the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations, and there were several forwarded suggestions from them on the commissions mandate and composition and a few more meetings with the Presidium, in the period before the mandate was voted and decided upon in June 2018. The TRC mandate and composition was established in June 2018, with TRC members who are academic experts in various areas relevant for the TRC and Dagfinn Høybråten was elected to be the leader of the TRC, he is a prominent former MP, and former leader of the Christian Democratic Party of Norway.⁸

Also, of interest to this thesis is that the TRC held a public hearing on the 6th of March 2023, where institutions and organisations could contribute with suggestions for measure for continued reconciliation. On the 1st of June the TRC will submit its final report and proposals for measures for continued reconciliation.

1.2 Literature review

TRC's has increasingly become a tool for not only transitional regimes to deal with its past, but also for stable democratic welfare states, such as Canada, to deal with past wrongdoings (Representantforslag 30 S (2016–2017)). Thus, there has been much academic focus on various Truth and Reconciliation Commission processes and their outcomes. However, less academic focus has been dedicated towards how TRC mandates are composed, despite TRC's mandates are what sets the stage for what is possible for the TRC to accomplish. This literature review will provide an overview of relevant research on TRC's in general, TRC's in non-transitional contexts and finally over the research that has been conducted on the Norwegian TRC process thus far. It has been found that while TRC's in general is a topic which has garnered much research, less research has been conducted on

⁸ The members of the TRC are Ivar Bjørklund, Professor, Håkon Hermanstrand, Research Fellow, Per Oskar Kjølås, Bishop Emeritus, Pia Lane, Professor, Anne Kristin Gurák, Senior Adviser, Marit Myrvoll, Researcher, Einar Niemi, Professor Emeritus, Anne Julie Semb, Professor, Liv Inger Somby, University College Lecturer, Aslak Syse, Professor Emeritus, Ketil Zachariassen, Associate Professor.

TRC mandates, how these mandates come to be, who authors them and the possibilities and limitations for TRC processes which are framed within the mandate.

Pricilla B. Hayner's (2010) book: *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions*, reviews forty commissions globally through interviews and thorough analysis of existing literature. Hayner's (2010) contribution to the field of truth commissions and transitional justice expands from assessing past truth commissions, asking why such commissions are chosen as a tool, the methodology of truth commissions, and theoretical perspectives on truth and reconciliation. Narrowing in further, there are several contributions on the topic of TRC's concerning Indigenous people, which is a rather new phenomenon. The Canadian TRC process was previously mentioned one of the inspirations for the Norwegian TRC. Ronald Niezen's (2017) book: *Truth and Indignation: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools*, is a critical analysis of the Canadian TRC, whereby Niezen in examining a range of sources analyses the Canadian TRC process. Niezen (2017) work is an important contribution to both the research on the Canadian TRC and larger field of TRC's.

There has been conducted a wealth of research on the Canadian TRC, thus I will only shortly mention one other contribution which has been of relevance to this particular thesis. Rosemary Nagy (2014) has in the Canadian context conducted research on the TRC mandate. Nagy (2014) analyses the Canadian TRC with a focus on what kind of commission and mandate that "...was envisioned..." (p. 200).

Kristen Thisted (2017) examines the Greenlandic reconciliation process by analysing the relationship and power dynamics between Denmark and Greenland, an important aspect since Denmark was not a part of the reconciliation process. Thisted (2017) additionally problematises the use of the word reconciliation, or *forsoning* in Danish, within this process, which is a very important discussion in the contexts of reconciliation processes involving Indigenous peoples, who might have other words and phrases more apt at describing what the term reconciliation might entail. Astri Nonobo Andersen (2019) also examines the Greenlandic internal reconciliation commission with a focus on how the commission was very different to that of previous TRC processes. Andersen (2019) focuses on how ideas from restorative and transitional justice influenced the Greenlandic process.

Rauna Kuokkanen (2020) has examined the stalling TRC process in Finland, which is relevant as a TRC concerning the Sámi in Finland. Kuokkanen analyses the process in Finland within a framework of settler colonial policy making and is critical of the TRC process in Finland, Kuokkanen also makes connections to the TRC processes in Norway and

Sweden. Kuokkanen (2020) additionally considers the possibilities that the subjects of the commissions might experience fatigue and problematises how the responsibility for making the TRC process in Finland work lies on the Sámi.

Finally, although the Norwegian TRC process is not yet completed, there have been several academic works which focus on various aspects of the Norwegian TRC. Sidsel Saugestad's (2019) article *Truth commissions* is about the Norwegian TRC, with a focus on the background of the establishment of the commission, paying attention to the arguments made in the process, including debates in the media. Additionally, Saugestad analyses the TRC in the broader context of Sami-Norwegian relationship, specifically through the analytical terms of redistribution and recognition. Saugestad (2019) examines these two perspectives on the Norwegian TRC and problematises that recognition, rather than redistribution is a part of the TRC's mandate. Anette Ballari Nilssen (2021) employs Saugestad's analytical framework of redistribution and recognition in her master thesis *Møter uten motstand - Om de åpne møtene i Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen*. In this thesis Ballari Nilssen (2021) examines the open meetings in the Norwegian TRC's process. This is a thesis from a masters in psychosocial work perspective; however, it provides important analysis and insight into how the TRC's open meetings have been conducted. Stein R. Mathisen (2021) also examined the TRC meetings, with a focus on how the personal stories and narratives that has been collected by the Norwegian TRC has been interpreted.

Johnsen (2021) problematises the implications of naming the Norwegian commission as a TRC, by examining the political debates about the naming of the commission pre-establishment of the TRC in the period from 2015 to 2017. Additionally, Johnsen (2021) highlights the final negotiations before the TRC was established between 2017 and 2018 and discusses the "...public-methodological implications of this name brought to light in the Commission's first implementation phase (2018–2020)." (Johnsen 2022, p.20). In this chapter Johnsen (2021) examines the same period that this thesis will focus on, and it is an especially useful contribution in contextualising the implications of naming the commission a TRC.

Hans Morten Haugen (2021) assesses how human rights might play a role in the Norwegian TRC. Haugen (2021) is "[I]nspired by the emphasis on human rights in the report of the Canadian trc and in the implementation of its recommendations..." (p. 207) Specifically, Haugen argues that there are six human rights which should be important for the Norwegian TRC process, in both its work and final report. These are "...self-determination, participation in political life, participation in cultural life, family life, private life, and human dignity." (Haugen 2021, p. 229). Finally, Anja Vranic and Eli Skogerbø (2022) has conducted

research into the media coverage of the Norwegian TRC between 2016 and 2021. Vranic and Skogerbø (2022) found a “...relatively extensive total coverage, over time, there was a decrease in media coverage and journalistic attention to issues concerning the TRC.” (Vranic and Skogerbø, 2022, p. 12). The authors also found that the media coverage of the TRC was especially poorly covered in nationwide media.

1.3 Thesis structure

This first chapter has introduced the topic of this thesis, the Norwegian TRC, and presented the aims and the research questions. The chapter has additionally provided a background sub-chapter that provided an overview of relevant TRC’s in non-transitional contexts, as well an in-depth background to the establishment of the Norwegian TRC.

The second chapter of this thesis will offer insight into the data collection process and methods chosen for this thesis. Furthermore, the empirical material will be assessed, evaluated, and described to the reader. Additionally, this chapter will include reflections on positionality and on ethics regarding the method of document analysis. In chapter three, the chosen analytical framework of qualitative analysis of ideas and ideological content will be presented. The analytical framework will be explained and has been applied to identify idea systems concerning reconciliation. This chapter will also offer some critical reflections on the analytical framework.

The fourth chapter will be devoted to discussing various theoretical perspectives on truth and reconciliation in TRC contexts. These theories will be utilised to discuss the findings in chapter six, as well as to contextualise the final mandate. The fifth chapter will examine how reconciliation as a term is defined in the final mandate. The final mandate will be analysed and examined with a focus on reconciliation, however other main features and characteristics will be presented and discussed as well. This is done in order to be able to discuss the findings in chapter six in conversation with the final mandate throughout the chapter.

Chapter six is devoted to the analysis of the material and discussion of the findings. The analysis begins with an examination of the meeting minutes, focusing on the theme of reconciliation, while also lifting up other themes that were discussed. Secondly, the changes from draft mandates to the final mandate will be discussed, with a dual focus on reconciliation and the sub-theme of rights. Further, ideas about rights during the mandate formulation process will also be discussed. Next, the idea systems concerning reconciliation will be analysed and discussed. First, the different actor’s idea systems will be presented and discussed, and in turn the idea systems will be compared to each other before it is evaluated to

what degree these idea systems concerning reconciliation can be found reflected in the mandate. The last section of chapter six will touch upon ideas on reconciliation in 2023, in the context of the TRC hearing on reconciliation, in order to try and discern if any changes in these three actor idea systems can be detected from 2018 to 2023. The seventh chapter is the conclusion, which will summarise and highlight the main findings.

2 Materials and methods

I have used document analysis to answer the research questions posed for this thesis. This chapter goes into further details of the empirical material, how it was gathered, and the methods used.

2.1 Empirical material and data collection

In order to gain insight into the process leading up to the mandate passing in the Norwegian Parliament, I started by seeking out the Norwegian Parliament website for the relevant documents. Already in the motion for the mandate, there were five attachments from the Sámi Parliament and the three Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations concerning suggestions about the TRC mandate (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018)). The motion also informs the reader that meetings had taken place between the Presidium and the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations. This led me to further research on if these meetings were documented and if there was any other relevant material relating to the process. The documents relating to this process were accessible on request from the Norwegian Parliaments post journal with the case number 2017/3219. However, as I have been a scientific assistant at the TRUCOM research project since august 2022, these had already been requested by the research project, thus I could access the documents without further inquiry.

In addition, the TRC initiated an open hearing on the 6th of March 2023 with the aim of gathering contributions from relevant organisations and institutions on measures for continued reconciliation, I followed the hearing online as the topic of reconciliation is central to this thesis. The whole hearing was recorded and is available on YouTube (Sannhets-og forsoningskommisjonen, 2023). Additionally, the written suggestions from the hearing were posted on the TRC's website. The data from this hearing has not undergone a systematic analysis but has been used in order to provide insight into if there can be detected any change in the key actors' ideas about reconciliation in regard to the TRC process.

2.1.1 Description of the data

There was a variety of different types of documents relating to the process of formulating the mandate. Thus, it is relevant to discuss the validity of these documents and what the different contexts of the empirical material were. As with all document analysis it is important to make sure that the analysed material is understood within the context it has been produced.

First, the final mandate is a key source that it is imperative to analyse as it is this document that the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations were invited to consult on and forwarded suggestions about. The analysis of the final mandate will have a particular focus on how the term reconciliation is understood. The final mandate was authored by the Parliaments Presidium, and is the only source analysed which is available in English.

Secondly, there are documented meeting minutes from four different meetings. It is the Norwegian Parliament Presidium who was responsible in authoring these meeting minutes, and the style of the meeting minutes is rather informal and only brings up main points from the meetings. It cannot be expected that meeting minutes in any circumstances will offer a full picture of everything said at a meeting, and this is also true in this context. We can also assume that the Presidium had meetings concerning the formulation of the mandate, where the meeting minutes are not available for public access, which means that it is difficult to argue something concrete about the Presidium's ideas on the TRC. However, what the meeting minutes can provide is insight into different ideas about the TRC mandate and composition, to a point, and crucially at different stages of this process. Therefore, I have chosen to analyse the meeting minutes separately from the other documents. The findings from the meeting minutes will be utilised to substantiate the main findings concerning the themes of rights and reconciliation.

Third, there are in all three draft mandates which were sent on hearing to the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations. The purpose being that this gave them an opportunity to comment and suggest changes to the drafts for the Presidium's consideration. The purpose being that this gave them an opportunity to comment and suggest changes to the drafts for the Presidium's consideration. The draft mandates are written in a formal, political style. The draft mandates offer an insight into how the drafts changed over time, and also serves as a reference point when reading the forwarded suggestions concerning the mandate and in the meeting minutes. This is because the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations commented in these documents on what they agree and

disagree on regarding the drafts. The changes to, and the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations comments on the draft mandates will also be the focus of its own discussion.

Then, there are the suggestions about the mandate forwarded to the Presidium from the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations. Four of these can be found as an attachment to the motion which contains the mandate, Innst. 408 S (2016-2017). These documents are all written in a formal style too, but to varying degrees. The Sámi Parliament has a long tradition in communicating with the Norwegian authorities, the Norwegian Parliament included, which shows in the style of writing in the documents originating from the institution. The Kven/Norwegian Finn organisation on the other hand also has a formal writing style, but there is a distinct difference from the Sámi Parliament. When it comes to the content of these documents, although it can be said to represent what the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations agreed should be forwarded, it cannot tell us about possible diverging opinions within these institutions/organisations or the communities' they represented. Further, on the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations, the choice was made by the author to analyse the documents produced by KLF and NKF, excluding the NFF from the analysis. This is because the NFF only forwarded a short document with suggestions about the mandate, in addition to two documents suggesting members for the TRC. The NFF was also only present at one of the two meetings with the Presidium. Therefore, I concluded that there was not enough empirical material originating from NFF during this process which would lend itself to a proper analysis of the organisations' idea system.

Additionally, I have included the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations' written and oral contribution from a hearing which the TRC held on the 6th of March 2023. This is because the hearing was held to gather contributions to the TRC, regarding the measures for continued reconciliation which the TRC are to propose. Reconciliation is one of the main themes of examination for this thesis, in particular the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations' idea systems about reconciliation, but also how reconciliation is explained in the final mandate. This data has been used to highlight if it is possible to trace any changes in the ideas about reconciliation from 2018 to 2023. The hearing was streamed live and can be found on YouTube, and the written contributions are available on the TRC's website.

The different types of empirical data provide a wealth of insight into the mandate formulation process and has in turn made it possible to analyse the different idea systems at play during this process. Additionally, I have utilised relevant media material in order to

contextualise the findings. All, except one, of the documents analysed are in Norwegian, thus all translations are my own. The final mandate is the only document that is translated into English and can be found on the TRC's website (Sannhets-og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d). When discussing the final mandate, I will thus refer to the English version.

Furthermore, I want to shed some light on other relevant documents which was excluded from the main analysis. It should be noted that sixteen other institutions, organisations and individuals also forwarded suggestions which were sent to the Presidium. Authors ranging from relevant organisations and institutions, except for a few these were Sámi organisations and institutions, and private persons.⁹ These were read and gone through by the author, to get an overview of the range of suggestions and actors interested in contributing their suggestions to this process. Although, this material too offers an insight into what other actors' ideas were on the TRC mandate and composition, it would have made the scope of this thesis too broad. Thus, the decision was made to focus on the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finnis organisations who were directly invited to consult during this process.

A particular document forwarded to the Presidium which I want to make a short comment on, is a document forwarded by the Sámi Parliaments. This document offered an overview of opinions voiced in public meetings that the Sámi Parliament held in the anticipation of a TRC being established. This document offers an invaluable insight into the expectations of the Sámi community of this process. However, due to the scope of this thesis, the focus has been on analysing the documents produced by the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations involved directly in this process as representatives for their groups.

The documents gathered are all the public access documents pertaining to the process of formulating the TRC mandate. After gaining a further understanding of the process, learning that although any person, institution or organisation could forward suggestions about the mandate and the commission, only the Sámi Parliament, the NKF, KLF and NFF were directly invited to take part in meetings with the Norwegian Parliament Presidium and comment on draft mandate, it became clear that it made sense to narrow the scope of the analysis to these actors, with the exception of NFF as previously clarified.

⁹ These documents are available upon request Norwegian Parliaments post journal with the case number 2017/3219.

2.2 Method

After selecting the data, the process of analysing the documents started. I chose to conduct this document analysis and using the methods of qualitative analysis of ideas and ideological content, as defined by Mats Lindberg, to answer the research questions posed for this master thesis. The aim of this thesis is to examine the process where the Sámi Parliament, and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations were asked to consult in formulation of a TRC mandate and composition from December 2017 to the final mandate being adopted by the Norwegian Parliament on the 12th of June 2018. To answer the research questions, the analysis has been focused on examining the material produced by the key actors who participated in this process, namely the Sámi Parliament, NKF, KFL and the Norwegian Parliament. The empirical data and data collection was illuminated in the previous sub-chapter.

The first step in this analysis was to identify the relevant sources, in this case all the written material that was publicly accessible, which have been presented. The second step was to identify the core themes that were reoccurring in the sources and were relevant to the content of the TRC mandate and process. The main objective was to discern what was important to and emphasised by the actors involved. This was achieved by detailed reading and done to narrow the scope of analysis, which further allowed for the more specific research questions to be asked. The analysis was then conducted with an intention of analysing what these actors' idea systems about reconciliation were and to what degree these idea systems are found in the final mandate. And further to be able to demonstrate where these idea systems diverged and/or aligned.

After thorough reading and coding based on repeated themes, I moved on to identifying value, descriptive and prescriptive statements in order to further identifying the different actor's idea systems. This was done in order to create VPD-triads which will be further explained in the next chapter. The analysis is also supplemented by general document analysis, in particular of the meeting minutes, draft mandates and the final mandate. The analysis of the documents has focused on reconciliation as a theme, and additionally has drawn out prominent ideas that did and did not make it into the final mandate. Furthermore, the document analysis has also focused on rights as a sub-theme as this was often tied to the ideas about reconciliation.

The Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF and their contributions and suggestion to the formulation of the final mandate is what this thesis focuses on. The actors were invited to the

proverbial table; thus, one can assume that the actors also aimed at influencing the formulation and content of the final mandate. The Sámi Parliament, KLF and NKF offered their view on what the TRC mandate should include, and why. Therefore, the aim has been to thoroughly examine and understand the actor's idea systems, to further understand how and why they differ or align with each other, and in turn to understand to what degree the three actually influenced the contents of final mandate. The following will be a detailed discussion about the chosen analytical framework which has made this analysis possible.

2.2.1 Reflections and ethics

First some reflections on positionality, I am a Norwegian, non-Indigenous, master thesis student who is writing a master thesis in Indigenous studies. I have conducted document analysis on a topic which concerns the Sámi who are Indigenous, and the Kven/Norwegian Finn who are a national minority in Norway. The aim of this thesis is to hopefully contribute to the research on the Norwegian TRC, on a so far under researched topic, which can hopefully be used as a steppingstone for further research on what in particular the term reconciliation might entail in the context of the Norwegian TRC process.

The focus of this thesis has been institutions and organisation and the documents that these produced during the mandate formulation process. As this thesis has conducted document analysis, the main ethical concern is not to misrepresent the documents in any way.

Additionally, as research fatigue is a widespread phenomenon, perhaps particularly in Indigenous communities. Thus, I hope that conducting document analysis for this thesis is a way conducting research on a topic which concerns Indigenous people, and in this case also national minorities, with the aim of contributing research to a relevant topic, without contributing to research fatigue.

3 Analytical framework: Qualitative Analysis of Ideas and Ideological content

I have chosen to utilise qualitative analysis of ideas and ideological content, as defined by Mats Lindberg (2017), to answer the research questions posed for this master thesis. Thus far, I have used the term *idea system* to describe what this thesis will analyse to answer the research questions. I use the term idea systems in my research question to mean action-guiding thoughts and ideas, that aim to preserve or change institutions or society. The aims of qualitative analysis of ideas and ideological content as presented by Lindberg is to identify VDP-triads, in order to identify and analyse these idea systems. VDP stands for value, description, and prescription. Thus, the analysis in this master thesis has been done by identifying:

“1) value – statements, expressed in various ways (ideals, goals, preferences, interests, or desired end-states); values for short (V)

2) descriptive statements, expressed in various ways (narrative accounts, descriptive assertions, situational analysis, evaluative assessments explanations or judgements) (of objects, agents' ideas, events, issues, problems, solutions or processes in the surrounding world of the actual situation); descriptions for short (D)

3) prescriptive statements, expressed in various ways (normative or practical conclusions, policy suggestions, recommendations, imperatives, orders, norms or rules); prescriptions for short (P).” (Lindberg, 2017, p.92).

Identifying VDP-triads in this context has been done to identify the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations idea systems concerning reconciliation. These idea systems will in turn will be presented, discussed, and compared and finally be utilised in order to assess the effects of these idea systems on the final mandate.

The table below visualises Lindberg’s “...two-level analytical scheme of ideological content, and the possible six main kinds of action-guiding social and political ideas.” (Lindberg, 2017, p.107). During the coding and analysis phase, I have utilised this analytical scheme to systematically analyse the idea systems concerning reconciliation. Therefore, tables visualising my analysis will be an important part of the chapters where I analyse the data and subsequently discuss my findings.

[Table 1.]

	Values	Descriptions	Prescriptions
Fundamental level	Moral, social, cultural or political values (Vfund).	a) Philosophical assumptions of human nature, history or society, held to be true (Dfund). b) High level evaluative–descriptive generalizations' the state or the market, or other general institutional complexes (Dfund). (Held to be true or valid).	General principles of social and political action (Pfund), (as suggested in the traditions of social and political philosophy, theory and ideology). (Held to be valid or appropriate).
Operative level	Concrete situation-specific or problem-specific goals (Gop).	Concrete descriptive or evaluative accounts of the (imagined) situation. or of the objects of the situation, or of the (imagined) issues, problems or possibilities of the situation (Dsit, op), or of the means-ends mechanisms or methods (Dme, op). (Held to be true or valid).	Concrete, situation-specific or problem-specific or means-ends specific prescriptions) for action. (Pop) (Held to be valid or appropriate).

(Lindberg, 2017, p. 107)

Lindberg argues that political and social ideas are “... *involved in and are important for the historical preservation or change of the institutional and cultural configurations of society.*” (Lindberg, 2017, p. 91). Thus, this analysis is not meant to find out the ideological ideal type that any of the actors in this process falls within, but rather to examine the possible ideational struggle between the three identified actors.

I argue that in identifying these VDP-triads this thesis will be able to examine both the throughline of the idea systems during the mandate negation process to the final mandate and discern what the different expectations the three most significant actors during this process had to the TRC mandate and process in general regarding the theme of reconciliation. Moreover, by identifying these VDP-triads this thesis will be able to discuss how the findings, VDP-triads, in relation to and in conversation with relevant theories concerning reconciliation.

This in turn can be relevant for further research after the TRC has handed in their final report, with recommendations on June 1st, 2023.

3.1 Critical reflections

I have found the analytical framework of qualitative ideational analysis to be suitable for this thesis, nonetheless, some critical reflections should be noted. When it comes to the data analysed, I only have access to written material that came directly from the Sámi Parliament, the Norwegian Parliament, and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations.

Thus, this thesis is limited to the findings from this data and cannot be said to offer insight into how individual actors' idea systems influenced this process. Therefore, I have focused on highlighting the contexts in which the documents were made and shown the limitations of the data. However, it is precisely this process, the context of this process and the institutions and organisations' idea systems that this thesis aims to investigate.

Another important aspect to contextualise is that it was the Norwegian Parliament who made the decision to include the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisation in this process, it was also the Norwegian authorities, including the Parliament, who made the final decision on the mandate and the composition of the commission. Thus, the Norwegian Parliament, although consulting with the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations in the process, this process can also be viewed as one-sided. This is because, the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations contributed to the process without having any control over if or how these contributions would be handled or included in the final result.

Lindberg notes that it is important not to mistake the agent while conducting a qualitative ideational analysis (Lindberg, 2017, p. 117). The idea systems analysed in this thesis are not those of individuals and do not necessarily represent all members of the institutions and organisations analysed, however the sources do represent what the authoritative view of the institutional and civil society actors prepared for this negotiation process. I have not managed to find any sources that document how the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisation prepared what should be forwarded to the Presidium regarding the mandate consultation. However, when it comes to one of the forwarded recommendations from the Sámi Parliament voted on three possible suggestions to forward to the presidium concerning the mandate on June 1st, 2018, just before the final mandate was established (Sametinget, 2018). Thus, offering some insight into the Sámi Parliaments process. The actors which are the focus of analysis: The Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF, are in this context acting as representatives for the Sámi, and the Kven/Norwegian Finns, respectively.

4 Theoretical perspectives: Truth and reconciliation

Theoretical perspectives on truth and reconciliation will be useful to reflect on when discussing the different idea systems concerning reconciliation identified by the analysis. By drawing from these theoretical perspectives, this thesis will contextualise the findings within the relevant theories on reconciliation in the context of TRC processes.

As stated previously, the full name of the Norwegian TRC, in English, is “The commission to investigate the Norwegianization policy and injustice against the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finnish peoples (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission)”. It is the short name; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that is most often used for the commission. It is what the TRC uses for their own Facebook account, and when the TRC is referred to in the media it is referred to as either the Truth Commission, the Reconciliation Commission or the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.¹⁰ I will not dwell too long on the myriad of implications of the chosen name for the commission in this chapter.¹¹ One important implication of this process being named a TRC to note, is that it puts the commission in a wider context of TRC’s internationally, where the South African TRC is often the first association, and further in context with TRC’s concerning Indigenous people, where the Canadian TRC is probably the most well know. Another implication of the Norwegian commission eventually being named as a TRC is that the name implies that the commission will deal with truth and reconciliation. Additionally, one of the three tasks of the TRC, probably the most anticipated parts of the TRC’s work, is to propose measures for continued reconciliation.

Both the concept of truth and reconciliation are at the core of TRC’s and there are many different understandings of these two concepts which needs to be discussed. Therefore, it is necessary for a more in depth understanding of these concepts, which will be vital for contextualising the discussion of the findings of this thesis project. The following section will discuss relevant theoretical concepts about truth and reconciliation, specifically within TRC contexts.

It should be noted that literature on the theoretical perspectives of truth and reconciliation in most cases focuses on TRC’s established in transitional contexts: from

¹⁰ The TRC’s Facebook account can be found on: <https://www.facebook.com/sannhetogforsoning>

¹¹ For a more in-depth discussions about the implications of the Norwegian commission being named a TRC, see Tore Johnsen (2021) for an insightful contribution that discusses this aspect in more detail.

conflict to peace. The Norwegian TRC's context, similarly to the Canadian TRC in example, are very different, as these TRC's were established in non-transitional democratic welfare states. Nevertheless, I argue that drawing from research and theories about truth and reconciliation from transitional contexts can be useful, as I aim to seek out what *can* potentially be relevant to the Norwegian TRC's context. As Hayner (2010) states that "[T]here is no one, single way to achieve reconciliation; it must be context-specific." (p.189) Thus, the aim of this thesis is to draw out theories about reconciliation which might be applicable to the Norwegian context.

A number of researchers have focused on the theoretical concept of reconciliation with a focus on Indigenous contexts, in particular because of the rise of TRC's concerning Indigenous peoples. Again, the Norwegian context is complex in that the TRC focuses on the Indigenous Sámi and the national minorities Kven/Norwegian Finns and Forest Finns. It has been difficult to locate any research on theoretical perspectives on reconciliation in the context of national minorities in a non-transitional, democratic state, such as Norway. Nonetheless, the theories which have been discussed in this chapter will be used in conversation with the Kven/Norwegian Finns idea systems identified in this thesis, which might contribute to further theoretical conceptualisation on this topic.

The Oxford Learning dictionary offers two definitions of the word *reconciliation*. 1. "an end to a disagreement or conflict with somebody and the start of a good relationship again." 2. "The process of making it possible for two different ideas, facts, etc. to exist together without being opposed to each other." (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2023). These two definitions, although not specific to a TRC process, are useful in providing a basic understanding of the word reconciliation in itself.

Reconciliation as a term in a TRC context on the other hand, is potentially more complex. This is because, ideally, the reconciliation aspect of a TRC should not be limited to the individual level. As Hayner (2010) points out

"[W]e must distinguish between individual reconciliation and national or political reconciliation. The strength of a truth commission process is in advancing reconciliation on a national or political level... On an individual level, however, reconciliation is much more complex, and much more difficult to achieve by means of a national commission." (p. 183).

Thus, in the context of a TRC, advancing reconciliation on a national and political level is the most achievable out of the two according to Hayner. Not that individuals cannot also benefit and start a personal reconciliation process as a result of a TRC process, but this is not where the strength of a TRC lies in regard to reconciliation. According to Hayner (2010)

then, reconciliation in the context of a TRC process should be focused on a national or political level.

4.1 Political reconciliation: Main features and critiques

The term political reconciliation then should be further explored. As already argued, there is a distinct difference between individual and political or national reconciliation, wherein a TRC process usually is best suited for the latter two. To add to this, TRC's are at their core usually political projects. In the Norwegian context, getting the TRC process started was in itself a political process where politics played an important part in shaping the TRC into what it became. In itself the concept of political reconciliation is valuable because it focuses on reconciliation in the context of political processes instead of in the context of individual reconciliation. In the following section I will expand on what characterises political reconciliation and evaluate how and what aspects from the framework of *political reconciliation* can be adapted to the Norwegian case. In addition, I will highlight some critiques of the term political reconciliation in the context of TRC processes concerning Indigenous peoples.

Kjell Åke Nordquist (2017) has conducted extensive research on various TRC's globally, with a focus on the concept of political reconciliation. Nordquist provides a useful contribution to the theoretical framework for the concept of political reconciliation. Nonetheless, it should be noted that Nordquist (2017) mainly discusses reconciliation in the context of transitional states' TRC processes, for example from conflict towards peace. However, I argue that Nordquist's conceptual framing of political reconciliation should be discussed further as some of the features of political reconciliation that he identifies can be found in the Norwegian process. Nordquist (2017) identifies five features of political reconciliation. In short these are:

1. Recognition of the importance of meeting “the other”,
2. Recognition of the moral dimension of this meeting,
3. Recognition of the respective parties that they need the other party to understand their own history and experience,
4. Recognition of the need to *not repeat the history*,
5. That the concept of political reconciliation is public (Nordquist, 2017, p. 44).

These five features will be considered when evaluating the term reconciliation in the final mandate, in order to discern if Nordquist's (2017) five features of political reconciliation can be identified to any degree in the final mandate. Further, the features will be reflected upon in the discussion of the idea systems on reconciliation. However, the core concern is: how does one define political reconciliation in a non-transitional state?

There are critics of the theories on political reconciliation from transitional justice contexts being applied to non-transitional context, and what this might mean, in particular for Indigenous peoples. Esme G. Murdock (2018) argues that

"...the deployment of transitional justice theory to processes of political reconciliation within so-called liberal democratic nation-states highlights particular asymmetries between theory and application, especially for reconciliatory contexts involving Indigenous peoples and settler states." (Murdock, 2018, p. 232-233).

Murdock also argues that there is a "...lack of critical attention to the primacy of land to processes of reconciliation that move toward Indigenous realities of justice." (Murdock, 2018, p. 233). Noting that the context of a settler state such as Canada is a different context to that of Norway, nonetheless, I would argue that Murdock points out some major flaws in the transferal of theories of political reconciliation from transitional justice contexts to non-transitional contexts. Additionally, Murdock's (2018) argument about how land can be an important aspect of a reconciliatory process involving Indigenous peoples is due more attention, which is most likely the in the Norwegian context too. Konstantin S. Petoukhov (2012) makes a compelling argument that

"[I]t could also be beneficial for truth commissions to adopt a holistic approach to addressing the harm done to the victims by considering not only the offense(s) that they suffered, but the underlying systemic factors that played a role in creating the conditions (for example, racial discrimination, maldistribution of material resources, and political marginalization of groups) for such offenses to occur. Doing so may help to ensure that similar offenses will never again be inflicted." (p.13).

The above quote from Petoukhov's (2012) resonates somewhat with Nordquist's feature fourth feature of political reconciliation, in that there is a need to recognise the need to not repeat history (Nordquist, 2017, p. 44). However, Petoukhov's (2012) goes somewhat further in suggesting that TRC's have a more holistic approach and have a broader approach to

reconciliation than the features of political reconciliation proposed by Nordquist (2017) suggests.

4.2 Reconciliation, apologies, and forgiveness

Nordquist (2017) points to the importance of being aware of the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation, because the two concepts are often conflated. Nordquist (2017) argues that

“...reconciliation cannot be a “surprise,” it is a relationship. Two persons, or two peoples, that are reconciling are aware of what is going on, it is a relationship-building process, where reconciliation is the name for both the process and the goal. To reconcile is to build a relation, the concept is relational. Forgiveness, however, is a unilateral concept.” (p.68)

This is a very important reflection, in that the reconciliation processes cannot demand forgiveness and additionally, that reconciliation is both the name of the process and the goal. The goal is not forgiveness necessarily. Another important dimension, which is very relevant for the Norwegian TRC process is that reconciliation is a relational concept, it cannot “be a surprise” to quote Nordquist (2017, p.68). In relation to the important differentiation between reconciliation and forgiveness, it is also pertinent to discuss apologies. Kiera Ladner (2018) illustrates that, although apologies and forgiveness *can* be an aspect of reconciliation but that “...reconciliation begins, not ends, with acknowledging the past and “saying I am sorry.” It extends beyond an act of forgiveness.”(p.245-246). The main reason why this is an important theoretical aspect to bring up, is that the Norwegian TRC is covering the Sámi who have been offered an apology by the King in 1997, and the Kven/Norwegian Finns and Forest Finns who have not. This might indicate that the possibility of a reconciliation process taking root is fundamentally different for the Kven/Norwegian Finns and the Forest Finns, compared to the Sámi. However, I would argue that while apologies can be an important recognition, and a possible starting point for a reconciliation process, apologies are more likely to be temporary and symbolic reconciliatory events. Because without any action tied to such apologies, they tend to be hollow or act as a temporary band-aid. Jeff Corntassel and Cindy Holder (2008) even argues that “[O]ffering apologies has become so commonplace in world politics that some have referred to this as the ‘Age of Apology.’” (p. 467). Thus, the weight that apologies made by various authorities carries, are often very light.

4.3 Reconciling with the past and the truth

Nordquist (2017) argues that “[R]econciliation is by definition a “historically directed” concept, seeking its role and meaning in dealing with the past.” (p.52). As Hayner (2010) also points out, it is a commonly held belief that if one

“Stuff skeletons in the closet, and they will fall back out of the closet at the most inauspicious times. Try to quiet the ghosts of the past, and they will haunt you forever— at the risk of opening society to cycles of violence, anger, pain, and revenge. If the conflicts of old are confronted directly, it is surmised, these conflicts will be less likely to explode into severe violence or political conflict in the future.” (p.23)

Thus, the logic is that in confronting with the past, and recognising it truthfully, a path towards reconciliation can be made. Esme Murdock (2018), however, raises the issue that “...maneuvering to deny a colonial/settler colonial present by relegating it to the historical, chronological past does nothing to address the landedness of current domination and ongoing structural injustice for Indigenous peoples.” (p.234). Suggesting that when reconciliation attempts relegate and sets *what* one is reconciling with firmly in the past, current structural injustices are ignored and thus reconciliation cannot be achieved. This is echoed by Petoukhov (2012) in that “...the colonizer often grants concessions, such as recognition of cultural identities, to the oppressed groups as surface remedies for injustices, while leaving colonial structures undisturbed.” (p6). Thus, I would argue that although the main feature of TRC’s often is motivated to recognise and deal with the past, the present cannot be ignored if a reconciliation processes it to truly be attempted.

Hayner (2010) poses three questions in order to assess if a reconciliation process is ‘taking root’: “1. How is the past dealt with in the public sphere? 2. What are the relationships between former opponents? 3. Is there one version of the past, or many?” (p. 189). A modified version of the second question, in order to be more appropriate for the Norwegian context, will be asked when reconciliation in 2023 is examined. I argue that if one rephrases the question to instead ask: What are the relationships between the Norwegian authorities, the majority population in Norway and the Sámi and the Kven/Norwegian Finn? This question can help in assess the possibilities of a reconciliation process taking root. This question will be

raised in the section of this thesis where measures for continued reconciliation and idea systems in 2023 is discussed.

Hayner (2010) points out that a crucial foundation for the call for TRC processes in many instances have been to seek the truth, in pursuit of a reconciliation process and states that “[M]any have asserted that knowing the truth about the past is necessary for reconciliation to take place.” (p.182). Thus, the two concepts, truth, and reconciliation, are in these contexts’ inseparable, one cannot have one without the other. Nordquist (2017) explains that “The most common role for the commissions is to reveal the truth – through statement-taking, open hearings or regular interviews and other forms of documentation – and make it known as widely as possible.” (p.48). The context of the TRC’s which Nordquist (2017) refers to here should be noted again as that of transitional regimes. Thus, TRC’s were often tasked with investigating crimes done by specific groups or persons in war or under dictatorship rule to map the truth to be better able to reconcile with it. In these cases, the *truth* is a central factor to find out what has actually happened, as for multiple reasons the truth can be difficult to find. The *truth* aspect in the Norwegian TRC context is necessarily different. In the Norwegian context it is the historical truths and indeed personal experienced truth which are the main *truth* aspect of the commission’s tasks. To this I include this thought-provoking quote from Nordquist (2017):

“Although establishing the facts about what has happened and why it happened, it is a classic task of truth and reconciliation commissions, to go beyond this level if the commission shall contribute with something new. At the same time, the full responsibility of making an analysis of the history does not lie with the commission. It is a challenge for individuals as well as groups and politically responsible actors in a society to do their own analysis and draw their conclusions. This is one of the points in having a truth commission. The commission can give space for reflections, and in this way allow for a society to formulate and interpret its own history.” (p.49).

I would argue that Nordquist has a very valuable point here.

Nagy (2014), however, problematises the relationship between truth and reconciliation in the context of the Canadian TRC. Nagy (2014) argues that “...truth may be relatively easily measured in the number of documents collected, statements gathered, and so forth. Reconciliation, in contrast, is far more nebulous.” (p. 216-217). Further arguing that there

might be a contradiction between truth and reconciliation. This notion will be useful to reflect on when discussing the idea systems concerning reconciliation, to discern the relationship between truth and reconciliation in the findings.

Having discussed relevant theories of the term reconciliation in TRC contexts, this thesis is moving on to an analysis of the final mandate and how the term reconciliation is defined or explained in the mandate.

5 The final mandate: an overview of main features and characteristics

The of departure for the analysis and discussion will start by examining the final mandate. This is to examine and present the content of the final mandate, especially concerning reconciliation. To both provide the reader with an overview of the final mandate's main features and characteristics, and to analyse how the final mandate defines the term reconciliation in discussion with the theoretical chapter of this thesis. This will be done in order to set the stage for the analysis and discussion on the meeting minutes, draft mandates and the different VDP-triads and idea systems on reconciliation.

The final mandate consists of ten headings in total, where the first describes the name of the commission, establishing it as a truth and reconciliation commission. Thus, the first aspect on the mandate which is of importance to consider is its name: "The commission to investigate the Norwegianization policy and injustice against the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finnish peoples (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission)". It is named as a TRC, but this name was not a given. During the mandate formulation process, none of the three draft mandates gave the commission the TRC name. The first two mandates suggests that the short name for the commission should be 'The Norwegianization Commission' (Stortinget 2018). This was criticised by the NKF and the Sámi Parliament, both because it was an expectation that the commission should be a truth or a truth and reconciliation commission, and also because the 'Norwegianization Commission' they argued, sounded like a commission which was going to conduct Norwegianization, which would be unfortunate (Innst. 408 S (2017–2018), p. 7). The third draft mandate suggested the short name 'Kven- and Sámi Commission', however the Sámi Parliament and the NKF again was against this name, while the KLF had no particular opinion on the naming of the commission (Stortinget, 2018, p.1). In the end, the Presidium must have decided to heed the Sámi Parliament and NKF's wishes when it came to the short name of the commission, and it was named as a TRC. Which places the Norwegian commission in the broader landscape of international TRC's.

The next section is titled *background*. This section explains some of the historical context of Norwegianization policies of which the TRC was going to focus on. In addition, this section explains that in the context of the Norwegianization policies officially ending in the late 20th century that "In the last thirty years, both legal and tangible measures have been implemented to remedy this." (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d). These remedies are

explained to be, regarding the Sámi, that the Sámi Act was passed in 1987, the establishment of the Sámi Parliament, the ratification of the ILO Convention 169, the Finnmark Act, and explains that the *Norwegian Government* has apologised for the previous policies directed towards the Sámi (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.).¹² For the Kven/Norwegian Finns these remedies are named as: Norway's ratification of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1999, leading to the Kven/Norwegian Finns receiving the status as national minority in Norway, and the recognition of the Kven (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d). The mandate further states that "[T]his in no way diminishes the injustice perpetrated against the Sámi and Kven." (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d)". The main reason why I wanted to pause at this section and highlight these quotes from the mandate is because they will be discussed in the following sub-chapters. I would also like to point out that these measures were in large part won by the groups themselves, by pushing for change in the Norwegian authority's politics towards them, in several ways. Moreover, the last part of the background section goes into why the TRC was established and that there had been a growing desire for such a commission to be established, from the Sámi Parliament (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.).

Next, under the heading *Subject*, the mandate states: "The commission shall primarily map the consequences of the Norwegianization policy regarding the opportunities for the Sámi and Kvens/Norwegian Finns to use and practice their own language, culture and traditional trade." (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.). The reason why I put the full quote here is to illustrate the possible limitations of the TRC mandate. The consequences of the Norwegianization policies undoubtedly affected a wider range of areas than the groups' opportunity to use and practice language, culture, and traditional trade. The effect of the Norwegian authorities' policies impact on the opportunities for use and access to land and natural resources is probably the most relevant to mention, especially regarding the Sámi. Going back to the theoretical discussion about reconciliation, the focus on language, culture, and traditional trade, might be something that limits the TRC process in focusing on the other areas. I would argue that the limitation to language, culture, and traditional trade might have

¹² Interestingly there is some discrepancy between the Norwegian and the English version of the mandate on this matter. The Norwegian version of the mandate states that the state has apologised for the previous assimilation policies towards the Sámi, this is simply incorrect. The former PM Kjell Magne Bondevik offered an acknowledgement of the assimilation policies in his New Year's speech in 1999, which is hardly the state apologising. The English version of the mandate is slightly more correct in stating that the Norwegian Government has apologised, however, it was one member of the Government, the PM who did this in an unofficial manner. The whole speech can be found here: [En framtid med håp – Virksomme ord](#)

limited the possibilities and to Petoukhov (2012) point that "...the colonizer often grants concessions, such as recognition of cultural identities, to the oppressed groups as surface remedies for injustices, while leaving colonial structures undisturbed." (p6). This section also states that the TRC shall "...also investigate the consequences of the Norwegianization policy for the majority population in terms of discrimination and the prevalence of prejudice against the Sámi and Kvens/Norwegian Finns." (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.). Which importantly includes the majority population as a focus of the TRC's mandate.

The following headline is titled *purpose*. The main features under this headline include that the purpose of the TRC is to lay the foundation for a "...recognition of the *experiences* of the Sámi and Kvens/Norwegian Finns while this policy was being enforced by the Norwegian authorities, and the consequences these experiences have had for them as groups and individuals." (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.).¹³ Again, it is worth pausing at the wording in this paragraph, to "...recognise the experiences...while this policy was being enforced..." is firstly geared towards individuals and secondly placing these events as being firmly in the past. This is relevant because under the heading *purpose* it is also stated that the purpose of the TRC is to "...through establishing a common understanding of the Norwegianization policy and its consequences, shall lay the foundation of continued reconciliation between the Sámi, Kvens/Norwegian Finns and the majority population." (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.). Hereby, establishing that the purpose is to promote a reconciliation process, although curiously, not between the groups and the Norwegian authorities who after all was the ones deciding and promoting the assimilation policies, but between the Sámi, Kven/Norwegian Finns and the Forest Finns and the majority population.

The next part of the TRC mandate is arguably the most important, it is the threefold tasks that the commission are to conduct. They are to map the history of the Norwegianization policies, investigate its impact today, and finally propose measures for continued reconciliation (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.). Historical mapping is described as "The commission's most important task...". However, the following statement slightly contradicts the description of this historical mapping under the heading *purpose*. The mandate states that the commission "...is to research and describe the policy and activities carried out by the Norwegian authorities against the Sámi and Kvens/Norwegian Finns, locally,

¹³ My emphasis.

regionally and nationally, from around 1800 until today.” (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen. n.d.). Thus, the TRC is to consider how the Norwegian authorities acts towards the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finns today. However, leaving the prioritising up to the TRC itself. This extends further as the mandate states that “[T]he commission shall particularly consider the role of the educational system, but shall also include religious, academic, cultural and social institutions and organisations’ activities in their investigations.” (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen. n.d). Again however, as with reconciliation, the Norwegian authorities specifically, is absent from this description, despite being named as the structures carrying out the Norwegianization policies in the same section of the mandate.

The second task of the TRC is to investigate the impacts of the Norwegianization policy today. Under this headline is only a short paragraph which describes that the repercussions that the TRC shall focus on are the repercussions “...connected to the Sámi and Kven/Finnish language and culture in today’s society, as well as any material, social, health-related or identity-related impacts of the Norwegianization policy, both for groups as a whole and for individuals.” (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.).

The third task of the TRC is of particular interest to this thesis. This is that the TRC shall propose measures for continued reconciliation. Again, the focus on the themes of language and culture is raised. The mandate states that such measures “...may include measures such as the continued promotion of Sámi and Kven/Finnish language and culture or raising awareness and spreading knowledge of the Norwegianization policy and its impacts on the majority population.” (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.). Although, reconciliation is not defined as a term in the mandate, the mandate ties reconciliation to the establishment of a “...common understanding of the past and a broader knowledge about our common history.” (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.).

Another section within the last task is that the “...commission shall present proposals for measures that can *create greater equality* between the majority and minority population...” (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.). I wanted to point out this particular wording in the mandate. First, the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finns are described as the minority population, thus the mandate does not describe that the Sámi have the legal status as Indigenous in Norway and the Kven/Norwegian Finns as a national minority. Secondly, I pause at the use of the wording that these proposals are to create greater equality between the groups. In choosing to describe a potential reconciliation process start with creating greater equality, is ignoring that this is a way colonial states have often described measures which ignore the fact that it is possibly not equality which is sought by the other

parties. It also ignores the aspect of Indigenous rights which is as stated in the affirmation in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) "...that Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such..." (United Nations, 2007, p. 2.). In all, that the fact that the mandate is to propose measures for two groups with a different legal status in Norway, the Sámi as Indigenous, and the Kven/Norwegian Finns as a national minority, is not problematised or discussed at all in the mandate.

Although the TRC mandate is the foundation on which the TRC process shall operate from, the mandate includes many suggestions which have been open for the TRC members to consider. This includes the suggestions that the TRC should have a reference group or groups, that the TRC find suitable means to disseminate the knowledge that it has gained in addition to the final report and the TRC "...shall set up a systematic and close partnership with affected communities and organisations, so that they are involved and consulted throughout the work." (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.). The TRC did not establish reference groups, have not shared much from their process thus far, with the exceptions of a few interviews in the national media with the TRC leader Høybråten. It is rather difficult to say if the TRC has had a close partnership with the affected communities and consulted with them. Thus, the commission has certainly had some leeway in regard to the recommendations made in the mandate.

5.1 Summary

In summary, this chapter has presented the final mandate and highlighted some of its main characteristics, especially relating to reconciliation. In essence, the final mandate focuses on the TRCs task of mapping the history and impacts of the Norwegianization policies. In have found that the final mandate especially met two of Nordquist's (2017) five features of reconciliation, namely the "Recognition of the need to *not repeat the history...*" (p.44). and the "Recognition of the respective parties that they need the other party to understand their own history and experience, (Nordquist, 2017, p. 44). This is because the focus of coming to a common understanding of history, as it is called in the mandate, and the aim of the mandate being that recognition and an understanding of this history will lead to reconciliation. However, going back to Murdock's (2018) critique of transitional justice and political reconciliation in the context of Indigenous people, this exact feature of the mandate might also contribute to relegating the colonial present in a fixed chronological history, which might ignore the "...current domination and ongoing structural injustice for Indigenous

peoples.” (p. 234). Nevertheless, the mandate also states that the TRC shall be forward looking, but here the mandate focuses on culture, language, traditional trade and knowledge dissemination, the most accepted arenas for the Norwegian authorities to promote support for. Which goes back to Petoukhov’s (2012) point referenced in the theoretical chapter, which is that “...the colonizer often grants concessions, such as recognition of cultural identities, to the oppressed groups as surface remedies for injustices, while leaving colonial structures undisturbed.” (p. 6). In relation to this, I would argue that although the mandate states that one of the TRC’s three tasks is to map the history of the of the Norwegianization policies by investigating and documenting the history in order to get to “...the ideology and the goals behind the policies...” and its impacts, the main focus is on the impacts of the policies, not the causes (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.). And when the impacts are investigated by the TRC the focus is to be “...predominantly connected to the Sámi and Kven/Finnish language and culture in today’s society, as well as any material, social, health-related or identity-related...” (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.). Nonetheless, we cannot know how far the TRC have gone in their process, as have been shown, there is some room in the mandate for the TRC to manoeuvre, however, there is nothing in the mandate which secures that the TRC will.

The mandate, as has been shown bases much of the foundation for reconciliation on a common understanding of history. The concept of recognising the past and attaining a common understanding of the past is repeated throughout the mandate. This is stated both under the heading *purpose* as well and is among the few aspects of reconciliation which the mandate argues will facilitate in a reconciliation process. This is echoed in Nordquist (2017) point that “[R]econciliation is by definition a “historically directed” concept, seeking its role and meaning in dealing with the past.” (p.52)

The following chapters will discuss in broader detail how the mandate came to be, and the findings of my analysis which focuses on the idea systems of the Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF concerning reconciliation. The following analysis and discussion of the mandate formulation process will show if the ideas and suggestions brought forward by the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations can be found reflected in the final mandate that has been examined.

6 Analysis and discussion

From this point forward this thesis will be analysing and discussing the mandate formulation process, where the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations were invited by the Norwegian Parliaments Presidium to consult on the TRC mandate and composition. The point of departure will be an examination of the meeting minutes from four meetings that the Presidium had with the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations.

6.1 Prominent ideas and discourses from the meeting minutes

In this chapter I will discuss the findings from the meeting minutes, with a special attention given to the themes of reconciliation and rights. Two of the meetings were with the Presidium and all, and additionally the Presidium had two separate meetings, one with the Sámi Parliament and one with the NKF.

The meeting minutes are different types of documents to the forwarded suggestions about the mandate. The setting is different, and one can also assume that there were elements from the meetings that the meeting minutes fail to capture. Thus, these findings have not been analysed into VDP-triads, as I would argue that there is not enough data to do this. However, I have chosen to analyse this data in conversation with the findings which follows in the next chapters, in order to contextualise the idea systems further showing that aspects of the identified idea systems were presented in the context of the meetings as well as in the written suggestions. The discussion of the findings from the meeting minutes will be conducted chronologically.

6.1.1 Meeting on December 15th, 2017

The first meeting about the formulation of the TRC mandate and the commission configuration was held on the 15th of December 2017. Present was members of the Norwegian Parliaments Presidium, the Sámi Parliament, NKF, KLF and NFF.¹⁴ From the meeting minutes there was a few noteworthy aspects which will be discussed.

¹⁴ Present at the meeting: From the Norwegian Parliament: Norwegian Parliament President Olemic Thommessen, Nils T. Bjørke, Dag Terje Andersen, Brit Brenno, Bjørn Arne Steine, Ingrid Sand. From the Sámi Parliament: Sámi Parliament president Aili Keskitalo, Henrik Olsen, Ingeborg Larssen. NKF: Leader Hilja Huru,

First, the meeting minutes show that reconciliation was only mentioned by the Sámi Parliament representatives. The representatives argued that reconciliation is a two-sided process, meaning that the majority population would need to be involved (Stortinget, 2017, p. 1). It might be useful here to reflect back to the theoretical chapter where it was argued that reconciliation is a relational concept that cannot happen without both sides who are reconciling participating, reconciliation cannot be a surprise (Nordquist, 2017, p.68). Thus, I would argue that the Sámi Parliament representatives came to this meeting a clear idea that if a reconciliation process was to be an aim of this commission, the mandate had to explicitly involve the majority population in Norway.

Following the meeting minutes after this initial comment by the Sámi Parliaments representatives, seemingly out of nowhere, the meeting minutes states: “The Sámi Parliaments President did not want to comment on questions about the Sámi’s status as Indigenous.” (Stortinget, 2017, p. 1). This statement comes seemingly out of nowhere with no recorded question or comment on any topic which would prompt this. Nonetheless, one can contemplate that the statement may be connected to the next section of the meeting minutes, which moves on to the KLF’s representatives' ideas about a commission. This section starts with the KLF representatives arguing that the commission’s work should not be a revenge over the past but concentrate on present issues. The same section is followed by the KLF representatives calling it unacceptable that the Sámi get ‘special treatment’ when it comes to language teaching in school (Stortinget, 2017, p. 1). Followed by several comments made by KLF representatives, which does not seem to have anything to do with a TRC mandate. This included explanations about how the ILO 169 definition of Indigenous peoples does not work in a Norwegian context and how, and comments on how the Finnmark Act must become ethnically neutral.

NKF’s main points during this meeting was that the commission should have a forward-looking perspective, that the commission should take inspiration from similar processes internationally, and that people who have experienced the Norwegianizations or the effects thereof, should get the opportunity to tell their story (Stortinget, 2017, p.2).

Beate Wilhelmsen. KLF: Leader Bjørnar Seppola, Vinö Nilsen, Audhild Hjalmarssen, Karl-Wilhelm Sirkka.
NFF: Leader Nils Petter Pedersen, Raija Marjatta Nakken.

The first meeting was the only meeting where the NFF was present, thus it is of interest to present what this organisation, who initially was against establishing a commission, had to say on the matter. The NFF representatives expressed that from their point of view they did not need constitutional protection or an apology (Stortinget, 2017, p. 2). Further, the NFF suggested that the mandate be split in to two, one Sámi part and one Kven/Norwegian Finn part (Stortinget, 2017, p. 2). This is the only time in the mandate formulating process that this was suggested. The NFF made the argument for a split mandate based on that both the history and legal status for the two groups is different (Stortinget, 2017, p. 2). The NKF representatives did not agree with this suggestion, arguing that the differences between the groups would become apparent through the commission's work, there was no further comment noted concerning this suggestion (Stortinget, 2017, p.2). It is interesting that this was suggested by the organisation who was the least active in this process, and additionally that this suggestion was not discussed again in the mandate formulation process.

6.1.2 Meeting between the Presidium and the Sámi Parliament, and subsequently the NKF

The Sámi Parliament asked for a meeting with the Presidium on the 27th of February 2018.¹⁵ The first point of discussion during this meeting was that the Presidium argued that if the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations wanted to have public meetings, like the Sámi Parliament was conducting, they could. But the Norwegian Parliament could not offer any economical support for the organisations (Stortinget, 2018, p. 1). The representatives from the Sámi Parliament expressed that they understood the organisations need for economical support and expressed concern on this topic (Stortinget, 2018, p. 1).

Further, the progression plan for the process of formulating a mandate and when the Parliament would need to vote on a suggested mandate was a topic for discussion (Stortinget, 2018, p. 1). Otherwise, the Sámi Parliaments representatives argued for an expert commission, meaning that the members appointed should be experts in various relevant fields (Stortinget, 2018, p.1). Additionally, the representatives had seven themes they wanted to be included in the discussion about the formulation of the mandate. These include, but were not limited to, that the commission should be aware of other commissions in the Nordic, the need

¹⁵ Present at the meeting: Sámi Parliament President Aili Keskitalo, Henrik Olsen and Ingeborg Larssen. From the Presidium: Norwegian Parliament President Olemic Thommessen, Eva Kristin Hansen, Bjørn Arne Steine and Ingrid Sand

for people to be able to express their personal experience to the commission in different ways which must be considered, and the need for inclusion of the majority population in the commissions process (Stortinget, 2018, p. 2). The inclusion of the majority population then was an idea that was repeated from the last meeting, and the need for people to express personal experiences to the commission is an idea which was also brought up by the NKF in the previous meeting.

NKF had a meeting with the Norwegian Parliaments Presidium on the 21st of March 2018, it was the NKF who had asked for this meeting.¹⁶ The first point of the meeting was discussing the Kven organisations economic situation and that the organisations had asked the Parliament for additional resources in order to be better prepared before the TRC started its work, a request which had been denied (Stortinget, 2018, p.1). It was also pointed out that despite this, NKF had held eight meetings where people could come with suggestions for the commissions mandate (Stortinget, 2018, p.1). The NKF leader also had suggestions regarding the mandate and composition of the commission. Regarding the latter it was suggested that the commission should be composed by experts in: "...history, under this in property history in Troms and Finnmark, law, cultural knowledge, social anthropology and language development." (Stortinget, 2018, p.1). This is an idea which was also proposed by the Sámi Parliaments representatives during the meeting previously discussed (Stortinget, 2018, p.1). The NKF leader further elaborated that "The commission members must represent themselves, not an organisation. And because of this it can be wise to establish a reference group where, amongst others, persons who are attached to organisations and institutions can come with suggestions to the commission." (Stortinget, 2018, p.1).

Language and language revitalization was also an important point that the NKF brought to this meeting (Stortinget, 2018, p.2). The NKF also argued that the commission's task timeframe should be from 1750 until today (Stortinget, 2018, p.2). Other points were the need for people to tell their stories, and that there should be trailing research on this aspect and the commissions process in general, that the commission's work should be efficiently communicated out to the public (Stortinget, 2018, p.2). All these points echo what the Sámi Parliament representatives also argued in their meeting with the Presidium a month earlier.

¹⁶ Present at the meeting: From the Norwegian Parliament: Eva Kristin Hansen, Brit Brenno, Ingrid Sand. From NKF: Leader Hilja Lisa Huru.

Thus far, the Sámi Parliament and the NKF had many of the same ideas about the TRC mandate, process, and composition.

6.1.3 The last meeting, on the 24th of May 2018

The last meeting before the TRC was established in June 2018 was held on the 24th of May 2018.¹⁷ During this meeting it again appears that the Sámi Parliament and the NKF's views and ideas align on several issues. Representatives from both voiced in this meeting that they strongly recommend that the commission be named a TRC, at least in the short name of the commission (Stortinget, 2018, p.1). The naming of the commission was discussed in the examination of the final mandate as well. For a short repetition, the two short names which had been suggested by the Presidium at this point were the Norwegianization Commission, or the Kven- and Sámi Commission (Stortinget, 2018). The KLF's representatives on the other hand expressed that they had "...no strong feelings connected to the name..." (Stortinget, 2018, p.1). Another important point which was taken up at the meeting was the timeframe of the commission's work, which was initially set to be from 2018 to 2020, which the Sámi Parliament representatives and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations all agreed was too short, and all agreed that 2022 was more realistic (Stortinget, 2018, p.2).

Henrik Olsen pointed to "...how it is important to look at how closely the state, church and school have worked together, and how the sciences has been used to back up the Norwegianization policies – something which is a reason as to why it was so effective as it was." (Stortinget, 2018, p.3). I would argue that what Olsen points to here is that there is a desire from the Sámi Parliament that the TRC investigate the core structures of the state, church and school system worked together, i.e., the structural foundations which made the Norwegianization policies effective. As shown in the overview of the final mandate states that "The commission shall particularly consider the role of the educational system, but shall also include religious, academic, cultural and social institutions and organisations' activities in

¹⁷ Present at the meeting: from the Norwegian Parliament: Marianne Andreassen, Kyrre Grimstad, fagdirektør Brit Brenno, Ingrid Sand, Bjørn Arne Steine. From the Presidium: Norwegian Parliament President Tone W. Trøen, Eva K. Hansen, Nils T. Bjørke. From the Sámi Parliament: Henrik Olsen, Sara Beate Eira Persson, Ingeborg Larssen. From NKF: Leader Hilja Huru, Ivar Johnsen. From KLF: Leader Bjørnar Seppola, Karl-Wilhelm Sirkka.

their investigations.” (Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen, n.d.). Thus, leaving the state out of this equation to some extent in the final mandate.

KLF leader Bjørnar Seppola was disappointed by how his organisations suggestions had been handled regarding the comments on the draft mandates and went on listing twelve points which spoke to this (Stortinget, 2018, p.2). This was echoed by KLF representative Karl-Wilhelm Sirkka. Sirkka argued that it was problematic that the draft mandate stated that the Sámi are Indigenous and the Kven are a national minority (Stortinget, 2018, p.3). Further arguing that the “Foundation for the conflict between the Sámi and Kven must be one of the main tasks of the commission’s investigation, especially if it is going to be a reconciliation commission. Norwegian citizens have the same rights and duties, but the Sámi have special rights manifested in law.” (Stortinget, 2018, p.3). Sirkka further noted that a statement from the meeting in December, about how “...the commission shall put forward measures which can create greater equality between the majority and minority population...” was not to be found in the draft mandate (Stortinget, 2018, p.3).

In response to this, NKF leader Huru pointed out that ILO 169 concerns the Sámi and the European Councils Convention on minority rights is what concerns the Kven, and that it is the commissions task to investigate the Norwegianization policies (Stortinget, 2018, p.3). The reason why I point this out specifically, is that throughout the mandate formulation process NKF and KLF have very different ideas about this specific topic. As will be demonstrated, while the NKF operated within the minority rights arena, KLF was more concerned with equal legal status to that of the Sámi, if this meant the dismantling of Indigenous rights for the Sámi in Norway or the status as Indigenous for the Kven/Norwegian Finns. This will be further contextualized in the following chapters. What the two organisations did agree on however, was that they lacked trust in having NIM as the secretariat for the commission (Stortinget, 2018, p.4). The last agenda in the meeting related to the composition of the commission. Where, again, the representatives from the Sámi Parliament and the NKF agreed that it should be a commission composed of experts, and the KLF argued for members representing the relevant organisations should be members of the commission (Stortinget, 2018, p.4).

6.1.4 Summary

Although it is impossible to know what was said word for word during the meetings, I would argue that the meeting minutes reflects the other findings which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. Already from the meeting minutes, it has been shown

that the Sámi Parliament and NKF had many of the same ideas regarding the mandate and structure of the TRC. And where KLF was in opposition to many of these ideas, with ideas and suggestions that often strayed away from strictly dealing with the TRC mandate and composition. Additionally, the meeting minutes shows that the NKF did not operate outside the framework of being a national minority, whereas the KLF ascribed to ideas that the division between the two groups into Indigenous and national minority was fundamentally wrong.

Lastly, a reflection on the specificity of the mandate was taken up at the last meeting. A member of the Presidium pointed out that the mandate "...cannot be too detailed." (Stortinget, 2018, p.2). To this statement NKF leader Huru agreed, so did Olsen from the Sámi Parliament (Stortinget, 2018, p.2). The point of highlighting this is that, as has been discussed in relation to the final mandate, that the mandate was not very detailed. As will be shown in the next chapter, the draft mandates in many were more detailed, but became increasingly less detailed from draft one to the finalised version.

6.2 Rights: Conspicuously absent from the final mandate

When going through the material, it became clear that the topic of rights in various forms, were important themes within the contributions from the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations to bring into the consultation process. And in some cases, the ideas about rights were linked to the ideas concerning reconciliation. Moreover, despite having identified rights as an important theme for the different actors during this process, rights, human, Indigenous, minority or otherwise, is not specifically referred to in the final mandate. The absence of rights or a discussion of the two groups different legal status in the final mandate was inherently interesting precisely because rights was identified as an important theme in the forwarded suggestions. However, after analysing the draft mandates it became even more peculiar. This is because these two factors were present in the first two draft mandates but was removed from the last two drafts and the final mandate.

Thus, the following section will first analyse and discuss the draft mandates with a focus on rights. Following an analysis and discussion of the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations ideas concerning rights and how rights should feature in the mandate and TRC process.

6.2.1 From drafts to final mandate

The following section will outline what changed from draft mandates to the final mandate, with a particular focus on the themes of rights. There were in total three draft mandates that were sent out on hearing (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.1). These drafts were authored by the Norwegian Parliament Presidium, and the Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF commented on these drafts and suggested changes.

The main structure of the draft mandates remained similar in all the draft mandates, and to the final mandate. The idea of the mandate giving the commission three set tasks was also a feature which remained unchanged. Additionally, some paragraphs were moved around and situated under different headings in the evolution of the mandate. This probably as a result of some of the comments on the structure of the mandate by the different actors.

Between the first and second draft mandate there are only a few minor changes to sentences and phrasings. One sentence that was added to the second draft mandate is useful to highlight in the context of this analysis "...the commission shall look at what consequences the Norwegianization policies, and the measures which have been implemented to remedy or counter this, have had for the relationship between the Sámi and the Kven/Norwegian Finns." (Stortinget, 2018, p.2).

Moving on to the third draft mandate however, much of the content from the first two drafts are altered. For one, the above example is changed to "...the commission shall look at the consequences of the Norwegianization policies in the light of the measures which have been implemented towards the different groups to remedy or counter this." (Stortinget, 2018, p.2). In this change, the input from the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations is taken away and is not present in the final mandate either.

The other significant changes from the first two drafts to the third, have to do with the topic of rights and the acknowledgement of the two groups different legal status. In removing two sentences in the transition from draft one and two to the third, the acknowledgement in the mandate that this commission was to cover two groups with different legal status in Norway completely disappears from the first two draft mandates to the final draft and final mandate. It is only two sentences. The first was in the two first draft mandates under the heading *Background*: "Both legally and politically, a number of measures have been implemented over the past three decades to restore the damage and improve the Sámi's position as an Indigenous people and the Kven/Norwegian Finns' position as a national

minority.” (Stortinget, 2018, p.1). To reiterate, this sentence was removed from the third draft as well as the final mandate.

It is curious that this sentence was removed, because it was one of only two phrases in the draft mandates which acknowledged the different groups legal status in Norway. A potentially important distinction because the TRC is to propose measures for further reconciliation, and the two groups different legal status can have something to say when it comes to the limits of what the TRC can suggest. One can of course argue that the TRC members will be completely aware of this and that this is only a question of language use.

The second example appeared in the first two drafts under the heading *Propose measures for continued reconciliation*. This paragraph stated that: “Measures that are proposed shall be based in the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finns legal status today and look at which measures are needed for the groups to have their rights fulfilled.” (Stortinget, 2018, p.1). The fact that this paragraph, connecting reconciliation with rights, was removed is worth taking note of. Additionally, the phrasing that the TRC shall “...look at which measures are needed for the groups to have their rights fulfilled.” Is also important, as this would be a rather specific task for the commission.

In the third draft, and subsequently the final mandate, this paragraph is utterly changed to: “The commission shall present proposals for measures that can create greater equality between the majority and minority population...” (Stortinget, 2018, p. 3). The result is a change from distinguishing the two groups and ensuring that the groups will have their rights fulfilled by the proposed measures, to grouping them together as the “*minority population*”. This sentence has already been problematised in the chapter concerning the final mandate, but now that the meeting minutes have also been discussed, it can be traced that this was a wording promoted by the KLF in the last meeting with the Presidium. It is, however, very difficult to say if this change is a direct result of the KLF influencing the process or if the Presidium made this change independently of the suggestion. In either case, the KLF gained the changes that their representatives argued for in the meeting and comments on the draft mandate, the wording of ‘greater equality’, as well as the removal of wording that distinguished between the two groups legal status in Norway and their rights connected to this status.

6.2.2 Discussion

It is difficult to trace the decision-making process from the Presidium's side, as the only available data which can offer some explanation for the changes in the drafts, are the

data from the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations. There are no written sources which goes into detail about this exact process from the Presidiums side, and if there is, these are not public access. Nonetheless, I argue that there is some room to discuss the different possible explanations for these changes from the data available, in combination with relevant knowledge about the possible political motivations from the Norwegian Parliaments point of view.

In response to reviewing the two first draft mandates the KLF specifically requested that the last example be removed from the mandate. KLF representatives further pressed on this specific part, stating that they had an issue with this part of the mandate during the last meeting. Arguing that it was unfortunate that the mandate differentiated between Indigenous (Sámi) and minority (Kven/Norwegian Finns) (Stortinget, 2018, p. 3). The KLF stated in the suggestions about the mandate that they

“...do not accept the division of the population into Indigenous and minorities. We argue that this division is racist. The Norwegian Indigenous politics is a way of conducting race politics. We argue that the commission should have a starting point in equality and equal treatment. The starting point for the inquiry must be that both Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finns are treated from a minority perspective.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.19).

And as shown this part of the mandate was changed into “The commission shall present proposals for measures that can create greater equality between the majority and minority population...” Thus, one possible explanation appears, which is that the KLF was successful in making its opinions heard on this matter which led to the mandate being changed to have no specific division between Indigenous and minorities, or their rights. To go into this a bit further, it is somewhat unexpected that KLF, a relatively small Kven/Norwegian Finn organisation, had such an influence over the Presidiums decision making, that it resulted in such a distinctive change from the draft mandate to the final mandate. Especially considering, that KLF’s ideas concerning the TRC mandate and process were very different from NKF and the Sámi Parliament. In addition to the fact that the KLF did not manage to get many of their specific or more provocative ideas about the TRC, such as a revision of the ILO 169, into the final mandate. Which leads to the question as to why the organisation was successful in influencing this particular part of the mandate?

I argue that the KLF’s success in influencing this particular change from the drafts to final mandate can possibly be viewed in combination with the Presidium not wanting to

promise too much in the mandate. As the Presidium stating in the last meeting that the mandate could not be too specific, the Presidium might also have realised the possible consequences of promising too much. Had the mandate included that the measures proposed should aim to fulfil the two groups Indigenous and minority rights, it might have resulted in a massive change in the Norwegian Indigenous and minority rights politics. Especially in the case for the Sámi, because it would have included rights to land and natural resources. Another possibility, is that the Presidium wanted to play it safe in other regards when it came to the mandate, choosing to focus on the larger themes, in common for both groups, of culture, language, and traditional trade, which would not gain negative reactions.

Taking into the consideration the internal governmental note which NRK leaked, described in the background chapter, which exposed the Governments trepidation that the Sámi Parliament expectations of measures connected to a commission, it becomes plausible that the Presidium too realised that there was a risk in promising too much in the mandate. To quote Johnsen (2021) "... the ministerial working document dated 15 June 2016 sought, bluntly put, to delimit the potential political 'damage' of the Sámi Parliament's call for a truth commission." (p.29). Thus, having a mandate that was too specific, and that dealt with rights, could have been viewed as a potential risk, also by the Presidium. Additionally, one can also imagine that if a mandate had been proposed which was divided into issues concerning the Sámi as Indigenous and the Kven/Norwegian Finns as a national minority, this would have received negative reactions, in particular from the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations, which the Presidium most likely wanted to avoid.

6.3 Ideas concerning rights.

Having discussed how rights and the different legal status of the two groups was originally intended to be a part of the mandate, but was scrapped, the discussion moves on to further examine the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations ideas on rights specifically. The theme of rights has not been analysed into VDP-triads; thus, this is an analysis of the core ideas within the forwarded suggestions concerning rights.

The Sámi Parliament reflected on rights and legal understanding today, to be a direct impact of the Norwegianization policies, the main topic of investigation of the commission (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p. 11). The Sámi Parliament commented that the draft mandate stated that "...a series of previous reconciliatory measures have been made, in example laws and institutions are mentioned." (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.7-8). These were examples of

measures that Norwegian authorities had implemented to remedy the effects of the Norwegianization policies. The Sámi Parliaments comment to this is that

“The Sámi Parliament wants to make a clarification on that the Sámi through these measures has gained partial recognition of their rights. Further, it is the opinion of the Sámi Parliament that it is important that also the UN declaration of Indigenous rights (UNDRIP) is mentioned in the mandate.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.7-8).

In another statement the Sámi Parliament argues that

“The school as an institution has been central and effective in the state drive assimilation policy, and this must especially be brought to attention. In the upcoming work on reconciliation there must be a focus on how existing institutions can have an important role in shaping and changing attitudes and at the same time increase the knowledge about Sámi conditions, culture, history, and rights.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018) p. 8).

Here, the Sámi Parliament first clarifies that the Sámi rights as Indigenous has only partially been recognised. And further linking reconciliation to rights and to the structures which, if changed, could participate in the opposite way of what they did during the Norwegianization era. Again, the Sámi Parliaments focus on the potential of structural changes that could contribute to further a reconciliation process.

To understand KLF’s ideas about both rights, one must first understand the core value that the organisation bases its ideas on during this process. This is that the KLF argue that the Kven/Norwegian Finns are “...as much or as little Indigenous as the Sámi.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p. 15). The documents authored by the KLF is permeated by this statement in various forms and is the foundation on which many of its ideas are based. An example of which is a statement concerning both rights and reconciliation, the KLF states that “[M]easures for reconciliation should include measures where reindeer herding is released from its current ethnical binding and where also Kven/Norwegian Finns and Norwegians are permitted to be a part of reindeer herding.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.17). KLF argues in this context that the Kven/Norwegian Finns were driven out of the reindeer industry as a result of the Norwegianization policies.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.16). It becomes evident, when analysing the ideas concerning rights, that the KLF was an outlier by having a

distinctly different set of ideas to the NKF and the Sámi Parliament. Subsequently, an entirely different view of what this TRC mandate and process should entail. Meaning that the KLF's forwarded suggestions concerning the mandate dealt to a much larger degree with rights than with the theme of reconciliation, which was to some degree entangled with the idea system on rights.

NKF's core ideas concerning rights in the forwarded suggestions was mainly focused on how the Kven/Norwegian Finns language rights should be fully backed by the authorities. This would change from 2018 to 2023, which will be discussed later in the thesis.

6.3.1 Discussion

The main point of this chapter has been to demonstrate that despite the fulfilment of rights being present in the first two draft mandates, and in the idea systems of the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations during the consultation process, the topic of rights ended up being absent from the final mandate. Additionally, the final mandate did not acknowledge in any significant way, in contrast to the draft mandates, that the TRC was dealing with two groups with a different legal status in Norway. As a result of this the final mandate does not convey any promises that the TRC process should include an investigation into the issues concerning rights, or that rights aspects will be considered when it comes to measures for further reconciliation. If this was a result of the KLF's protests, or the Norwegian Parliaments Presidium realising that they did not want to promise too much in the mandate is difficult to say. How this has impacted the scope of the TRC's process is also difficult to say, but that will become more evident the final report is submitted in June.

It has also been shown that the NKF operated within the scope of minority rights both within the meeting minutes and ideas about rights which were focused on strengthening language rights. And also, that the NKF aligned with the Sámi Parliament on ideas concerning rights. This coalition was also visible after the TRC process had started. In 2020, NKF and NSR published an opinion piece together titled 'Venner, ikke fiender' in English: 'Friends, Not Enemies' (Huru, Daleng, Johnsen, Kieskitalo, Balto, Andersen, 2020, n.p). It was widely distributed, at least in newspapers in the north of Norway, and stated that the advancement of either Kven or Sámi language or culture was not a threat to the other (Huru, Daleng, Johnsen, Kieskitalo, Balto, Andersen, 2020, n.p). The NKF would undergo a shift in this view however, which will be further discussed when the data from 2023 is the focus of analysis.

Haugen (2021) argues that "...tensions between the Sámi and Kven are partly explained by the fact that the Kven/Norwegian Finns have failed to achieve a recognition as ancient inhabitants of Norway." (p.227). What becomes clear from the documents analysed however, is that during this consultation process, it was only the KLF who held this tension. The NKF on the other hand operated within the framework of national minority rights, as was even pointed out by Huru during the meeting on the 24th of May 2018 (Stortinget, 2018, p. 3).

I would like to add an additional reflection on the theme of rights and its absence in the final mandate. Although the mandate does not secure that the TRC will go into and suggest measures for topics such as rights to land and natural resources, which are topics that concern the Sámi, the TRC leader Høybråten has engaged himself in the media concerning the Fosen case. The TRC even sent a letter to the Norwegian Oil and Energy Department in November 2022, before the Fosen protests happened in 2023, where the TRC asked how the department were following up on the Supreme Court judgment that the building of the windmills was in violation of the Sámi reindeer herder's human rights (Ballovara, 2023). In a news article in NRK, Høybråten was concerned about how the TRC could contribute to measures for continued reconciliation if the decisions from the Norwegian Supreme Court did not have consequences (Ballovara, 2023). Nevertheless, even if the TRC in its final report has something about the Fosen case, it cannot be assured that the TRC has gone into other conflicts regarding land and/or natural resources because it is not a task that is secured within the mandate.

6.4 Idea systems concerning reconciliation.

In this chapter I will present the analysis of VDP-triads from the empirical material produced by the Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF. The discussion of the findings will go through the idea system on reconciliation, through the identified VDP-triads. In combination the VDP-triads in conversation with each other forms the idea system. Then, the idea system as a whole will be discussed in terms of the theories about reconciliation. As can be seen in the tables there are two levels to the different dimensions, the fundamental level, and the operative level, as described in table 1. The identified VDP-triads and idea systems will first be presented and discussed in order, following a discussion of the similarities and differences in the identified idea system. Before I finally discuss to what extent the idea systems concerning reconciliation and the more general ideas examined in the previous chapters appear to be reflected or not in the final mandate.

6.4.1 The Sámi Parliament

As can be observed in the table below, it was possible to identify several V, D and P statements in the material produced by the Sámi Parliament, resulting in an identifiable and fully formed idea system concerning reconciliation.

[Table 2.]

	Value statements	Descriptive statements	Prescriptive statements
Fundamental level	“...reconciliation cannot happen before wrongdoings are made right.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.10).	<p>a) “The rationale and practice of the Norwegianization policy was racist and deprived the Sámi of their rights and life development on this basis.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p. 9)</p> <p>c) “...the decision to set up this commission implies a public acknowledgment that measures are still needed to remedy the effects of the state's assimilation policy.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.7).</p>	<p>a) “It is important to establish a common understanding of the authority’s treatment of the Sámi and the Kven/Norwegian Finns.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p. 10).</p> <p>b) “Suggesting measures for continued reconciliation, will be an important task for the commission (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p. 10).</p>
Operative level	<p>Reconciliation must be a goal for the TRC commission (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.10).</p> <p>(Goal)</p>	<p>c) The UNDRIP should be mentioned in the mandate (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.12).</p> <p>d) The commission should be open to the fact that reconciliation is different for people and areas in the Sámi society, but that there are common denominators in this reconciliation process. (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.12).</p>	<p>d) Reconciliation should include repatriation of human remains and cultural heritage objects to Sámi communities. (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.12).</p> <p>e) Schools should be used as a platform for the reconciliation process. (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.8).</p> <p>f) Reconciliation should include that “The Sámi Parliament get the greatest possible degree of autonomy in budgetary matters. It is part of Sami self-determination, which in turn will be an element in a reconciliation process.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.12).</p>

Starting with the value dimension of the Sámi Parliaments idea system concerning reconciliation. The fundamental value statements are that “...reconciliation cannot happen before wrongdoings are made right.” and that “[R]econciliation must be a goal for the TRC.”

(Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.10). These two statements are indicative of the values of the Sámi Parliament idea system. That reconciliation should be an integral part of the TRC mandate and process, but that initiating a reconciliation process would be conditional, and could not be possible before wrongs are made right. The specific ways in which this could be achieved are described in the descriptive and prescriptive statements.

In order to offer more context to the value dimension, the full statement is

“[T]o the point about purpose we want to add that our goal is to walk into the future as a proud people with a clarified relationship with our past. It is important to establish a common understanding of the authority’s treatment of the Sámi and the Kven/Norwegian Finns. Reconciliation must be a goal. But reconciliation cannot happen before the wrongdoings are made right.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p. 10).

This quote showcases the relationship between the values and prescriptions. Because the value statements propose that reconciliation must be a goal for the TRC, but that no reconciliation can happen before wrongs are made right, and the importance put on establishing a common understanding the authority’s treatment of the groups in the prescriptive dimension.

In the descriptive statement the Sámi Parliament makes it clear in describing that “The rationale and practice of the Norwegianization policy was racist and deprived the Sámi of their rights and life development on this basis.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p. 9) and secondly that “[T]he Sámi Parliament considers that the decision to set up this commission implies a public acknowledgment that measures are still needed to remedy the effects of the state's assimilation policy.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.7). Combining the value statements found with the descriptive statements, these two dimensions forms the rational of the following prescriptive statements.

The statements found in the prescriptive dimension are more specific in nature. Suggesting concrete measures and expectations of the TRC mandate and process. The prescriptive statements of the Sámi Parliaments VDP-triad shows that the Sámi Parliament had both broad or general ideas about what the mandate and the TRC process should lead to: the process should lead to reconciliation, and a recognition/common understanding of the past. I would argue that the Sámi Parliaments descriptive and prescriptive statements on the fundamental level include elements of what Nordquist (2017) posits as one of the essential features of political reconciliation. Namely the “...recognition of the need to *not repeat the*

history...” (p.44) And additionally, related to the common aim within TRC processes in that that reconciliation is often historically directed in “...seeking its role and meaning in dealing with the past.” (Nordquist 2017, p. 52). Although, both of these goals cannot be said to be necessarily easy to achieve, they are broader ideas, than the more specific prescriptive statements found on the operative level.

The operative level of the Sámi Parliaments idea system is a lot more specific, and I would argue more in line with Murdock (2018) visions for what reconciliation for Indigenous peoples might entail. First found in the descriptive statement concerning the inclusion of UNDRIP into national law would aid in reconciliation, and secondly in the statement which argues for repatriation of cultural heritage objects and human remains to Sámi communities, and greater autonomy for the Sámi Parliament in budgetary matters would contribute to reconciliation. These statements also show how ideas about rights were intertwined in the Sámi Parliaments idea system concerning reconciliation. To add to this, these specific suggestions go further in tying reconciliation to measures which would challenge the current situation of the Norwegian authorities Sámi politics.

In all, during this process the Sámi Parliament presented a very fully formed idea system about reconciliation. In that the Sámi Parliament had a VDP-triad that suggest that the Sámi Parliament came into the process with an idea system about reconciliation which was very much prepared, and it also shown that the concept of reconciliation was important for the Sámi Parliament to make a part of the TRC mandate. Moreover, the Sámi Parliament had both more general and more specific ideas that they wanted to be included in the mandate.

6.4.2 NKF

The table below shows the NKF’s statements regarding reconciliation analysed into VDP-triads.

[Table 3.]

	Value statements	Descriptive statements	Prescriptive statements
Fundamental level	a) Human rights must be for us all. b) “The commission	a) “The commission should lay the groundwork for further work with reconciliation processes in Norway and in this context the transfer and	a) Measures: “A common understanding of the history...” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.33).

	should lay the groundwork for further work with reconciliation processes in Norway...”(Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.28).	dissemination of knowledge for recognition is central. (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.28).	b) People need to be able share their stories. (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.30).
Operative level		b)"It is crucial that the preparatory work for the two groups of people can be said to have been good and equal in retrospect - so that the result can be seen as a real work of reconciliation."(NKF, 2018, n.p).	c) The commission should propose measures for further reconciliation...” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.30).

The NKF’s value statement that “The commission should lay the groundwork for further work with reconciliation processes in Norway...” (Innst. 408 S – 2017–2018, p. 28) is a stated goal, in that the NKF clearly argue that the commission should lay the foundation for further reconciliation. Thereby expressing that reconciliation should be something that this TRC process should actively engage with. This is connected with the descriptive statement that argues that the “...transfer and dissemination of knowledge for recognition is central...” (Innst. 408 S – 2017–2018, p. 28). Here the NKF is engaging with the same approach to reconciliation as the Sámi Parliament, as shown previously in this chapter. Which in turn align with theories about how dealing with the past and recognising the past is an important aspect of political reconciliation.

On the operative level of the descriptive dimension however, the NKF describes another aspect which is specific to the context of the Norwegian TRC. Namely that it was to include the Sámi and the Kven/Norwegian Finns. The context for this descriptive statement is that the Sámi Parliament as an institution had and has more funds which could be put into preparing for the commission, than the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations. The descriptive statement on the operative level related to this in stating that "[I]t is crucial that the preparatory work for the two groups of people can be said to have been good and equal in retrospect - so that the result can be seen as a real work of reconciliation." (NKF, 2018, n.p). Here the NKF lifts an issue which is important to the organisations idea system on reconciliation; that an equal opportunity to take part in preparatory work for this TRC process

would in turn enhance the possibilities for reconciliation. The NKF points to a power imbalance between the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations and the Sámi Parliament being a factor in reconciliation. Unlike the KLF, however, this was expressed in a way which did not attack the Sámi Parliament for this uneven economic situation, but rather requested more support from the Norwegian Parliament. Nevertheless, as was shown in the chapter on the meeting minutes, the request from the organisations for economic support for this process was turned down.

The NKF's concern with the uneven economic situation between the Sámi Parliament, and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations was in relation to the preparatory work for the organisations before the mandate was finalised. Thus, the argument was that if the TRC process started off on unequal footing it would be more difficult to achieve reconciliation. This is an aspect of the idea system that was not related to the mandate, but which still was of importance to the organisation.¹⁸ Thus, the reconciliation process which this TRC was intended to strengthen might have been negatively impacted during this phase, not due to the commission itself but the process leading up to finalising the mandate and the TRC.

The prescriptive statement on the fundamental level NKF states that relates to people need to be able share their stories (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.30), going back to the theoretical discussion on political reconciliation, the NKF's VDP-triad points towards the public dimension of a possible reconciliation process and the importance of meeting the other (Nordquist, 2017, p.44). NKF also describes the need for recognition of the history of the assimilation policies directed towards the Kven/Norwegian Finns and Sámi as a building block which a TRC process should help facilitate to further the reconciliation process.

To sum up: the NKF's identified VDP-triad about reconciliation did not have as many specific prescriptive statements on what reconciliation might entail in comparison to the Sámi Parliament. The NKF's most specific prescriptive statement did in fact not relate to the mandate or the TRC process which would follow, but the preparatory work which the organisation argued was necessary for them to undertake before the TRC process commenced. I would argue that the identified VDP-triads on reconciliation show that the NKF had an idea system which did not push beyond the boundaries of minority rights. The

¹⁸ The Sámi Parliament shared this concern with the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations. See discussion on meeting minutes.

KLF however, chose an entirely different strategy and thus had an idea systems on reconciliation which differed distinctly from the two which have been discussed up until now.

6.4.3 KLF

From both the written minutes of the meetings with the Norwegian Parliament and the forwarded suggestions about the mandate, it becomes clear that KLF very much stood out in this process from the other actors when it came to the ideas and opinions voice about the TRC mandate and process. It is no different when it comes to the KLF’s idea system about reconciliation. The following is a discussion about the KLF’s idea system concerning reconciliation. The table below shows the KLF’s statements regarding reconciliation sorted into a VDP-triad.

[Table 4.]

	Value statements	Descriptive statements	Prescriptive statements
Fundamental level	“The Kven/Norwegian Finns are as much or as little an Indigenous people as the Sámi.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018) p.15)	a) “To have reindeer on the farm as livestock with other livestock has old traditional roots among the Kven/Finns.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018) p.17)).	a) “Measures for reconciliation should contain measures where reindeer husbandry is released from its current ethnic binding and where also Kven/Finns and Norwegians are allowed to take part in reindeer herding.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018) p.17)).
Operative level		b) “By composing a commission with members distributed on the three ethnical groups that were involved in the Norwegianization policies, and let them cooperate, we can get a cooperation which will be able to create a platform for a common understanding of history and course of events and at the same time form a foundation for continued cooperation and reconciliation.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.18).	b) "The only thing that can correct the situation and in the long run contribute to reconciliation is that each ethnic group, individually, is enabled to build up linguistic, cultural and scientific competence, so that they can build up their societies and cultural institutions anew and in that way be enabled to help themselves.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.18).

Within the KLF’s VDP-triad the core value statement is the foundations on which most of the descriptive and prescriptive statements for the organisation derives from. This has been identified as the value statement that “Kven/Finns are as much or as little an Indigenous

people as the Sámi.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.15). This value statement was repeated numerous times in the forwarded suggestions to the Presidium, and in the meeting minutes as well. The analysis shows that this part of the VDP-triad is crucial to the organisations ideas about what reconciliation should mean in the context of the TRC mandate and process, but also in the organisations idea system about rights which was discussed previously.

Traces of the logic in that value statement is found in the descriptive statement on the fundamental level, which is that “To have reindeer on the farm as livestock with other livestock has old traditional roots among the Kven/Finns.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.17). This is because in Norway one must be Sámi in order to participate in the reindeer herding industry.¹⁹ The descriptive statement on the operative level however, the KLF is concerned with the composition of the commission.

“By composing a commission with members distributed on the three ethnical groups that were involved in the Norwegianization policies, and let them cooperate, we can get a cooperation which will be able to create a platform for a common understanding of history and course of events and at the same time form a foundation for continued cooperation and reconciliation.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.18).

The other two idea systems analysed did not connect the TRC composition with ideas about reconciliation. Thus, this is another way in which the KLF’s idea system stands out of the three. The prescriptive statement on the operative level by the KLF states that

“The only thing that can correct the situation and in the long run contribute to reconciliation is that each ethnic group, individually, is enabled to build up linguistic, cultural and scientific competence, so that they can build up their societies and cultural institutions anew and in that way be enabled to help themselves.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.18).

This statement is in many ways more similar to the other two idea systems, in having focus on rebuilding in example language knowledge and cultural identities. Nevertheless, the prescriptive statement on the fundamental level again is linked to the organisations core value and states that measures for reconciliation should make the rights to reindeer herding

¹⁹ It is the same in Sweden, but through a different system than in Norway.

‘ethnically neutral’, which directly connects with the statements examined in the descriptive and value dimension. Nevertheless, KLF’s descriptive statement on the operative level also connects reconciliation with a common understanding of the past, as the two previously discussed idea systems also did.

6.4.4 Discussion: Similarities and differences

Having presented an overview of the Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF’s VDP-triads concerning reconciliation, it is now possible to discuss the similarities and differences found between the Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF. The analysis has shown that both the NKF and the Sámi Parliament had many VDP-statements that were similar to each other. Both had value statements which suggested that reconciliation should be a goal for the TRC process, and both had ideas about how recognition or a common understanding of history could contribute to reconciliation. The two differed somewhat in both the descriptive and prescriptive dimension, where the Sámi Parliament had very specific prescriptive statements, and the NKF had ideas in the same dimension connected to the Kven/Norwegian Finns opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the TRC. I would argue that reconciliation, was an important aspect for both to be an important part of the final mandate, albeit with some different ideas of exactly how.

The analysis also shows that KLF’s VDP-triad concerning reconciliation differed fundamentally from the NKF and the Sámi Parliament’s VDP-triads. I argue that the reason for this is found in the KLF’s value statement, which was not found to concern reconciliation as a value, but that the descriptive and prescriptive statements were built on. The KLF’s ideas about rights is relevant to discuss because the value statement found in the VDP-triad in combination with the organisation’s ideas about rights, indicated that from the KLF’s point of view, there is a continuous power struggle between the Kven/Norwegian Finns and the Sámi. This perceived power struggle is based in that the Kven/Norwegian Finns have a lesser degree of rights than they ought to have because the Sámi has achieved the legal status as Indigenous in Norway. Leading the organisations VDP-triad on reconciliation to reside in a space in which the idea system that they form argues that the TRC process should lead to the Kven/Norwegian Finns gaining the legal status of Indigenous in Norway, thereby achieving the same legal status as the Sámi. Or the Sámi should lose their legal status as Indigenous and become equal to the Kven/Norwegian Finns as a national minority. This argument is based on the presented findings in this and the previous chapters, in addition to a thorough reading of the KLF’s suggestions to about the mandate.

Additionally, one of KLF's descriptive statement connected the composition of the commission with reconciliation. Specifically, it was found that the organisation would view a commission where the organisations were representatives would be reconciliatory. This idea is also an outlier, as neither the Sámi Parliament nor the NKF had VDP-triads which made this connection. To add to this, the same descriptive statement from KLF's VDP-triad connected such a composition with achieving a recognition of the history.

NKF, KLF and the Sámi Parliament, have statements in the VDP-triads which describes the need for recognition of the history of the assimilation policies directed towards the Kven/Norwegian Finns and Sámi as a building block which a TRC process should help facilitate to further the reconciliation process. Although, the Sámi Parliament differs from NKF in its idea system on reconciliation, in particular by connecting rights to reconciliation, both have similar prescriptive dimensions: recognition of the past, and measures for the future.

6.5 To what extent were the idea systems on reconciliation reflected in the final mandate?

The following discuss to what degree the different idea systems on reconciliation is reflected in the mandate. This section will also problematise the concept of *a common understanding of history*, for the purposes of reconciliation. There will additionally be a short discussion concerning identified in the VDP-triads that did not make it into the final mandate, to show the variety of ideas at play during the mandate consultation process.

It has already been established that the term and concept of reconciliation was not defined in the final mandate. However, within the final mandate reconciliation is used as a term connected to the measures which the TRC is to propose. These measures, the mandate suggest, should aim at promoting the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finn culture and language, in addition to dissemination of knowledge about the Norwegianization policies and its impact to the majority population. Measures for the future was identified in the Sámi Parliaments VDP-triad concerning reconciliation and that the TRC should contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about the history of the Norwegianization policies were found in the NKF's VDP-triad. Thus, parts of these two actors' idea system can be found reflected in the mandate.

Additionally, the term reconciliation is also tied to the task of the TRC to contribute to a common understanding of history, particularly the Norwegianization era, which the mandate suggest will contribute to a reconciliation process. To recognise history and come to a

common understanding of the past is wording used in final mandate. As has been shown, this is also reflection of various statements found in all three VDP-triads identified. However, as was also shown in the idea systems, in addition to the discussions on rights and meeting minutes, KLF had a very different understanding of history to that of the Sámi Parliament and the NKF. Thus, the ‘common understanding of the past’ needs to be problematised as a reconciliatory measure.

Going back to the theoretical discussion, I again quote part of Nordquist (2017) argument that

“...the full responsibility of making an analysis of the history does not lie with the commission. It is a challenge for individuals as well as groups and politically responsible actors in a society to do their own analysis and draw their conclusions. This is one of the points in having a truth commission. The commission can give space for reflections, and in this way allow for a society to formulate and interpret its own history.” (p.49).

However, it is debatable how much space is made in the mandate for what Nordquist (2017) argues when it comes to the presentation and interpretation of history. Going back to KLF’s, the organisation makes it clear that in their forwarded suggestions that “[T]he Kvens history cannot be decided by the Norwegian Parliament or the Sámi Parliament.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018), p.14). Therefore, if the Norwegian TRC is to present a history which does not align with the KLF’s view of history, will the KLF accept the TRC’s findings? Will the organisation perhaps be unwilling to participate in a potential reconciliation process if this is the case? These are certainly risks, that would perhaps make the TRC’s work more complicated than the task of mapping history which is set in the mandate. Ravi de Costa’s (2017) observation of the TRC in Canada might be used to illustrate the point I make here. de Costa’s (2017) reflection was that “[T]he Commission represented its work as uncovering a history and presenting it to the public, yet it assumed from the outset what the effect of this would be: healing to those who told it, moving and mobilizing to those who heard it.” (p.195).

To add to this discussion, another of KLF’s diverging descriptive statement has to be elaborated on. The Presidium clearly went with the option of suggesting professional academic experts in various areas relevant for the TRC, and a leader who was a prominent politician and former MP. Thus, the KLF’s descriptive statement that reconciliation was tied to choosing members for the commission from various organisation representing the communities was not reflected in the mandate. To add some more context to this, when analysing the organisations ideas on rights, the KLF stated that

“For any people or ethnical group, the people’s history is a central part of the people’s identity which ties the group together. The right to define one’s own history is a part of the minority’s rights. The Kvens history cannot be decided by the Norwegian Parliament or the Sámi Parliament.” (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018) p. 14).

Thus, another question, or possible issue, with tying a common understanding of history to the reconciliation process in the mandate arises: will the KLF accept a common understanding or a recognition of the past which derives from the academic experts which were eventually selected for the commission? It is certainly a possibility which have become apparent from this analysis and examination of how the final mandate first does not specify reconciliation, nor reflects many of the specific ideas, or indeed the possible conflicts between the different ideas which were brought to the mandate consultation process.

If one goes back to Nagy’s (2014) argument that “...truth may be relatively easily measured in the number of documents collected, statements gathered...Reconciliation, in contrast, is far more nebulous.” (p. 216-2017). I argue that the findings from the mandate formulation process points towards Nagy’s proposed contradiction between truth and reconciliation. Especially if there is only to be one truth, relating back to Nordquist’s (2017) point, then a reconciliation process might be difficult to achieve.

To reiterate, in examining the final mandate with a focus on reconciliation, it quickly became apparent that none of the *specific* parts of the three actors’ VDP-triads concerning reconciliation was reflected in the mandate. What can be found in the final mandate, were the VDP statements that in the broader sense suggested that reconciliation was connected to recognition of the past and measures for the future, which has been identified in parts of the Sámi Parliament and NKF’s VDP-triads. And a recognition and common understanding of the past, found in all identified VDP-triads.

A part of the Sámi Parliaments VPD-triad which cannot be traced in the final mandate, is the concern with the underlying structures which made the Norwegianization policies effective at the time and the effects of it still felt today. As has been shown, the Sámi Parliament clearly linked reconciliation to the possibility of investigating and changing these structures. The final mandate is concerned with the impacts of the Norwegianization policies, and the impacts on language, culture, and states that measures for continued reconciliation should focus on these areas for the Sámi and Kven/Norwegian Finns. Thus, that these suggestions from the consultation process cannot being found in the final mandate.

As for who is reconciling with whom, the mandate states that the TRC shall promote *continued* reconciliation between the minority groups and the majority population. Thus, the different ideas concerning *who* is reconciling with whom, reconciliation between the Sámi and the Kven/Norwegian Finns, reconciliation between the groups and the Norwegian authorities, did not make it through to the final mandate.

When discussing the recommendations of such commissions, Hayner (2010) argues that.

“Specificity seems to help. General, broadly sweeping recommendations are difficult to implement, awkward as an advocacy tool, and hard to measure in terms of implementation. Commissions that have provided very specific suggestions are more likely to see success. Of course, this expectation must be within reason, given the complexity of some of the reforms that may be necessary, and the process should also allow for further consultation and expert input after the commission concludes.”(p.194)

We do not know yet what the recommendations for further reconciliation will be and thus, how the TRC will attempt suggest reconciliatory measures to ameliorate past and ongoing harms is uncertain. If the mandate a clearer idea about what reconciliation should be in the Norwegian context, then perhaps it would be easier to manage expectations. Since the TRC has not published partial reports, the hopes that a reconciliation process will take root as a result of this TRC process hinges on the final report and suggested measures for further reconciliation which will be submitted on the 1st of June 2023.

6.6 A discussion on other ideas reflected in the final mandate

What can be found reflected in the final mandate was the general ideas relating to people being able to tell their personal stories to the TRC, which was a suggestion from both the Sámi Parliament and the NKF. That the TRC should have reference groups was a suggestion made by the NKF, and supported by the other actors, which is reflected in the final mandate (Innst. 408 S (2017-2018) p.11 and p.26). However, although this is an example of ideas from the consultation process making it into the final mandate, it also shows that it is also important how these ideas were reflected in the mandate. Because establishing reference groups was not a requirement but something the TRC should consider, and the TRC ended up

not establishing reference groups, despite the suggestion in the mandate. Thus, even though the idea was reflected in the mandate, it ended up not having an impact on the TRC process.

As argued in the discussion about rights, the KLF's influence on the mandate seems to have been in removing certain elements that the organisation was unhappy with, references to the two groups different legal status and fulfilment of rights, rather than influencing the mandate by managing to get its specific suggestions there.

6.6.1 Measures for continued reconciliation: Ideas in 2023

On the 6th of March 2023, the TRC invited to a public hearing where the TRC wanted input on measures for further reconciliation.²⁰ This was done in order to get inputs from relevant organisations and institutions, as the third task of the TRC is to propose measures for farther reconciliation which will be a part of the report. The Sámi Parliament, NKF, KLF which has changed name to KFR²¹ were present, as well as a variety of organisations and institutions. The Sámi Parliament, NKF and KFR all had the floor and spoke at the hearing and submitted suggestions in writing, which are available at the TRCs website. Although, this hearing took place after I had started writing this thesis, I chose to include this material because it was focused on reconciliation, which is an important theme discussed in this thesis. For some additional context, the Fosen protests had just taken place, and became an unavoidable part of the conversation at the hearing.

This section will examine the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations contributions to this hearing with the aim of finding out if their idea systems on reconciliation has remained the same or has changed. Additionally, the modified version of Hayner's second question will be asked to assess weather reconciliation is taking root: What are the relationships between the Norwegian authorities, the majority population in Norway and the Sámi and the Kven/Norwegian Finn? This section will also discuss if it is relevant to ask about what the relationship between the TRC and the Sámi Parliament and the two Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations are, and if this might also be an indicator of the possibility of reconciliation taking root as a result of this process.

Following are some reflections and a discussion on what these actors contributed with at this hearing.

²⁰ The whole hearing can be found on YouTube: [Sannhets- og forsoningskommissjonen: Høringsmøte 6. mars 2023 - YouTube](#)

²¹ In 2020/2021 the KLF changed its name to Kvensk Finsk Riksforbund – Kven Finn Association

6.6.2 The Sámi Parliaments ideas about reconciliation in 2023

In the Sámi Parliaments case, the oral contribution at the hearing and the forwarded written statement is relatively similar. Thus, I will mainly discuss the written suggestions forwarded for the TRC hearing. On first glance, the conclusion is that the written suggestions are very much in line with the idea system that was found during the mandate formulation process. The document states that the Sámi Parliament hopes that the TRC report "...will point to measures on how to establish a common understanding of the past..." and additionally states that the reconciliation process will be challenging for both the Sámi and Norwegian society (Sametinget, 2023, p.1). Although a fully formed idea system will be difficult to discern from four pages, I would argue that the main features remain the same as the ones identified from the consultation process.

However, the Fosen demonstrations had just happened. Thus, there are some notable changes in the relationship between the Sámi Parliaments and the state, relating to Hayner's question. The Sámi Parliaments points to a crisis of confidence between the Sámi people and the Norwegian state because of the Fosen case (Sametinget, 2023, p.1). And further expressed concern that "...the measures for reconciliation will be brought forward with insufficient will and action from the state when it comes to accommodate us Sámi." (Sametinget, 2023, p.2). Asking the question: what are the relationships between the Norwegian authorities, the majority population in Norway and the Sámi Parliament? The Fosen case have shown that the Norwegian authorities is prepared to continue to operate the windfarms on Fosen, despite the supreme court judgement that it was breach of human rights, not Indigenous rights, but human rights. The relationship because of the Fosen case is one of distrust from the Sámi Parliaments point of view, thus the possibility of continuing or starting a reconciliation process involving the Norwegian authorities less likely, especially when the Fosen case is at a standstill. Thus, I would argue that if rights and in particular Indigenous rights to land and resources had, as have been discussed preciously, been a part of the TRC mandate, this concern could at least have been somewhat alleviated.

Another important point that the Sámi Parliament put forward in the forwarded suggestions on measures for further reconciliation, was that "[F]or the Sámi Parliament it is difficult to point to concrete measures before we know what findings that the commission will put forward." (Sametinget, 2023, p.3). If the TRC had followed the recommendations from the mandate, to closely cooperate and inform the concerned organisations and institutions or

had published preliminary reports, it would have been less difficult for the organisations and institutions to offer suggestions relevant to the TRC's findings.

To answer Hayner's second question, the relationship between the Sámi Parliament and the Norwegian state was at this moment in time lacking in trust.

6.6.3 NKF's ideas about reconciliation in 2023

There were some differences between NKF's written and oral contribution to the hearing. I will start this segment by discussing the written contribution.

The title of the written contribution of the NKF was "[T]he Kven are one of the original peoples in Norway and the northern calotte." (Norske Kveners Forbund, 2023, p.1). Already in the title there is a significant shift from the ideas identified in 2017-2018. As stated in the previous chapters, the NKF operated within the norms of national minority rights during the mandate formulation process. Thus, during this period there must have been a change in the idea systems within the organisation, at least in how they view their themselves as a group or what political strategy they opt to use.

It is not the task of this thesis to go into depth to examine why this change occurred, but it is prudent to note, in particular in regard to what expectations the NKF now might have to the measures that the TRC will propose in June 2023. Additionally, this one document and speech at the TRC hearing cannot account for or give insight into the fully formed idea system of the NKF but can offer some insight on the matter. Further, the NKF's suggestions states that "Kven is an original language on the North Calotte." (NKF, 2023, p.1). I would argue that this is a new example, of the NKF utilising language and rhetoric which is more similar to arguments used by Indigenous peoples, such as being the 'original' peoples and language of the northern calotte. This is further proven when the NKF cites co-determination as one of the main goals which will strengthen the Kven/Norwegian Finns position in Norway (NKF, 2023, p.1). This type of idea was not identified during the mandate formulation process.

These ideas were reiterated in the oral presentation where a representative from the organisation stated that «[I]t helps very little with the status as a national minority when our recommendations and claims are dismissed on the basis of us not having the status of Indigenous.» (Sannhets-og forsoningskommisjonen, 2023, 01:00:30). This type of idea and rhetoric, focused on legal status and on minority versus Indigenous rights is more similar to the KFL, is a distinct change from the ideas presented by the organisation during the mandate formulation process. Another suggestion by the organisation was a state secretary for national

minorities, which the KFR also suggests (NKF, 2023, p. 2). Nevertheless, the main focus of the written suggestion is that measures for continued reconciliation must contain measures which strengthen the Kven language (NKF, 2023, p. 1). Which in more aligned with the core idea system of the NKF during 2017-2018.

Additionally, I want to include the last statement of the written suggestion from the NKF: “[T]here can be no reconciliation without the Kven, there will be no reconciliation without the Kven language and there will be no reconciliation without Kven co-determination.” (NKF, 2023, p. 2). This statement by the NKF firmly sets some conditions for reconciliation, from the organisations point of view. Additionally, this can tell us something about the current expectations that the NKF has of the final report, meaning if the report does not include measures which fulfil these requirements, a continued reconciliation process will be difficult to achieve from the NKF point of view.

In conclusion, although the NKF have kept some of the core ideas from the mandate formulation process, it is also clear that these ideas have undergone a substantial change. I would argue that the organisation in 2023 has moved away from staying within the boundaries of minority rights and aligning with the Sámi Parliaments idea systems on reconciliation and rights, and closer to that of the KLF. To answer Hayner’s question, the NKF’s relationship with the Norwegian Parliament in particular is fraught, which is evident from the written suggestions (NKF, 2023, p. 2). Additionally, it is worth noting that especially from the oral presentation during the hearing, the NKF’s stated that the organisation had not experienced a systematic or close cooperation with the TRC despite this being in the mandate, also the organisation has had reports that Kven’s have felt badly treated at the TRC meetings. Resulting in the relationship between the Kven and the TRC had not been as good or filled with trust as they had hoped.

I would argue that there had been a shift in the NKF’s idea systems, and in use of political strategies from 2018 to 2023. This shift means that the NKF seems to have adopted views and political strategies which have become more similar to the KRF in many ways. The exception being that the NKF promotes the Kven language and the KFR mainly promoted the Finnish language. This is especially evident in the argument that the Kven/Norwegian Finns are original peoples of the northern calotte. This shift is thus away from national minority rights perspective and rhetoric, towards a quasi-Indigenous right’s political perspective.

6.6.4 KFR's (KLF) ideas about reconciliation in 2023

KLF (now KFR), as NKF, also had somewhat different points brought forward in the written statement and the oral contribution, thus I will again start by discussing the written statement forwarded to the TRC. The first suggestion that the KFR had of measures for further reconciliation was the establishment of a Kven/Norwegian Finn legal commission (Kvensk Finsk Riksforbund, 2023, p. 1). The written contribution otherwise was focused on suggestions relating to on the burning down and evacuation of Nord-Troms and Finnmark during the Second World War, and the consequences that this had for the Kven/Norwegian Finns. Relating to this the organisation argued that to recognise and understand this history would be reconciliatory. This was something that also came up during the mandate formulation process from the KLF, although not as a main focus of the idea system on reconciliation. This is a very specific history, and most of the written contribution focused heavily on this one historic event, rather than on all the ideas that the organisation presented during the mandate formulation period. The suggestion, although not focused on the Norwegianization policies as such, is more in line with theories about reconciliation being directed towards recognising the past.

The oral contribution from the hearing took up various other issues as well. I will list some of the measures for further reconciliation that the KFR representatives took up at the hearing which was not in the written statement: that goat farmers that have been displaced by the reindeer herding industry, that the political and civil rights article 27 should be included on the website for national minorities, a larger budget for Kven/Norwegian Finn concerns, correcting incorrect history writing, promote a school for three languages (Kven, Finnish, Sámi), and Kven/Norwegian Finn self- and co-determination (Sannhets-og forsoningskommisjonen, 2023, 05:42:30-05:47:40). Additionally, the KFR explained that the organisation wanted a state secretary for the national minorities only.

Thus, it was found that many of the features of the organisations idea system on reconciliation identified during the mandate formulation process did not take centre stage during the hearing. Although the organisations core value, that the Kven/Norwegian Finns are as little or as much Indigenous as the Sámi, was definitively the underlying subtext still.

Another observation from the hearing was the antagonistic tactics towards the Sámi and the Sámi Parliament. During their oral presentation one KFR representative stated that “It has been 14 135 days, that is 28 times 500 where the Kven/Norwegian Finns have not had our legal rights examined.” (Sannhets-og forsoningskommisjonen, 2023, 05:42:30-05:47:40).

This is clearly a jibe directed to the slogan used by the Fosen protesters, which was ‘500 days of breaking human rights’ referring to the Supreme court ruling that building the windmills on Fosen to be a breach of the reindeer herders human rights. Further, the representative from KFR stated that “There has been a lot about the Fosen judgement today, we argue that the Fosen judgement cannot be used as a precedence for anything at all as long as our legal rights have not been examined.” (Sannhets-og forsoningskommisjonen, 2023, 05:42:30-05:47:40). Thus, the KFR political tactics remain the same, despite the organisation not stating the value statement previously identified out loud. And further their ideas remain the same, although a few new specific prescriptive statements are found in 2023. These are the request for a Kven/Norwegian Finnish legal commission, like the Sámi has already had.

To Hayner’s question, the KFR’s relationship towards the authorities lacks trust, and indeed the KFR, as with NKF, does not seem to have had the best relationship towards the TRC either. KFR leader Seppola co-wrote an opinion piece published in 2022, which stated that the Kven’s confidence in the TRC was thin even before it was started and had not been significantly strengthened by then either (Dervo&Seppola, 2022). Additionally, the attitudes of the organisation towards the Sámi Parliament and towards the Sámi having the status as Indigenous and Indigenous rights, seems to not have undergone any change since the mandate negotiation process.

6.6.5 Discussion

As the hearing on the 6th of March focused specifically on different organisations and institutions forwarding suggestions relating to the measures which the TRC is to propose in their final report on the 1st of June. Thus, I bring up Hayner’s (2010) argument concerning recommendations of such commissions that “[S]pecificity seems to help. General, broadly sweeping recommendations are difficult to implement, awkward as an advocacy tool, and hard to measure in terms of implementation. Commissions that have provided very specific suggestions are more likely to see success.”(p.194). As has been shown, there are and were specific ideas about measures for reconciliation forwarded by the actors in the mandate negotiation process in 2018, and also in 2023. Nonetheless, as the Sámi Parliament problematised, it was difficult to submit concrete measures for further reconciliation because the TRC had not shared any of their findings at that point.

The relationships between the different institutions, organisations, with both the TRC and the Norwegian authorities were at this moment lacking in trust from the part of the organisations and institutions representing the Kven/Norwegian Finns and the Sámi, for a

number of reasons which have been discussed during this chapter. Which makes the foundation for a reconciliation process to be able to take root as the TRC submit its report a challenge at best.

Lastly, the struggle between different ideas about reconciliation seems to have shifted from 2018 to 2023. This is because of the shift in NKF's ideas about what measures for reconciliation should include for the Kven/Norwegian Finns, towards KFR's idea system on reconciliation.

7 Conclusions

The first task for this thesis was to analyse the final mandate, authored by the Norwegian Parliaments Presidium, and discuss how the term reconciliation was understood within the mandate. It was showed that the final mandate corresponded to two of Nordquist's (2017) five features of reconciliation (p. 44). Moreover, the analysis showed that the final mandate did not specifically define the term reconciliation but tied reconciliation to recognising and coming to a common understanding of the history of Norwegianization. This aspect, although corresponding to the task of most TRC processes, was also problematised by Murdock's (2018) critique of transitional justice and political reconciliation in the context of Indigenous people, in that this feature of the mandate might also contribute to relegating the colonial present in a fixed chronological history (p. 234). Nevertheless, the term reconciliation was also tied to the of the impacts of the Norwegianization policies still felt today, which prompted the third task for the TRC which is to propose measures for further reconciliation. It was stated in the mandate that these measures should focus on the continued promotion of Kven/Norwegian Finn and Sámi culture and languages. The delimitation that this task was to only focus on these themes was also problematised. In sum, the final mandate was a relatively broad, and did not define what reconciliation would comprise off during this process, or to what extent the TRC should concern itself with Indigenous or minority rights when considering measures for reconciliation.

Secondly this thesis analysed the documents produced by the Sámi Parliament and the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations during the mandate consultation process, asking the: To what degree the idea systems concerning reconciliation presented by the Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF during the mandate formulation process be found final mandate? And in what ways these three institutions/organisations had idea systems and goals that were similar or dissimilar? The thesis should also examine if there were any other prominent ideas that did or did not influence the final mandate.

The analysis has shown that there was a wide range of ideas about what reconciliation might mean in the Norwegian TRC process and mandate during the consultation process. Nevertheless, it has also been shown that none of the more specific ideas identified in VDP-triads were reflected in the final mandate. The core idea from the consultation process which was reflected in the final mandate that recognition and common understanding of history would aid in a reconciliation process and should be a part of the TRC's tasks in the final

mandate. This idea was shown to be present in NKF, KLF and the Sámi Parliaments VDP-triads concerning reconciliation.

It was also shown that there were ideas identified from the consultation process which were reflected in the final mandate. First, the name of the commission, a truth and reconciliation commission, was a suggestion from both the Sámi Parliament and the NKF which is reflected in the final mandate (Stortinget, 2018, p. 1). The short names: Norwegianization commission and the Kven- and Sámi Commission was the initial suggestions in the draft mandated from the Presidium. However, this was changed to a TRC in the final mandate which was the suggestion by both NKF and the Sámi Parliament. I would argue there are immediately higher expectations from the TRC name than if the other two names had been chosen. Additionally, I would argue that had the commission not been named a TRC or a truth commission, both the Sámi Parliament and NKF would have been unsatisfied with the consultations.

The idea of a reference group is another example of an idea from the mandate consultation process that made it into the final mandate. It was a suggestion that the NKF presented which did make it through to the final mandate (Stortinget, 2018, p.1), which was also supported by the KLF and the Sámi Parliament. However, this was presented in the mandate as a suggestion which the TRC should consider, and the TRC decided not to establish any reference groups. This shows that it also mattered in what way the suggestions from the mandate consultation process are reflected in the mandate. As this idea was presented as an option for the TRC, it had no impact on the TRC process as the TRC decided not to follow this option through. Therefore, this was shown as an example of an idea being reflected in the final mandate, but eventually not having an impact on the TRC process as it was only in the mandate as a suggestion.

Nevertheless, my analysis has shown that the contributions from the Sámi Parliament, NKF and KLF in 2018 included specific ideas about reconciliation, which did not make it into the final mandate. It has also been shown that during the consultation the Sámi Parliament and the NKF had ideas about reconciliation that were overall similar. Whereas the KLF was an outlier during the process, diverging significantly from the other two in the identified idea system on reconciliation, which was grounded in the core value, identified as being that ‘the Kven/Norwegian Finns are as much or as little Indigenous as the Sámi’.

Additionally, it has been shown that the Sámi Parliament, NKF and KFL all in some way in their VDP-triads connected reconciliation with the strengthening of rights. Thus, emphasising the connection between achieving reconciliation with the strengthening of their

group's rights. The findings have also suggested that although the KLF was an outlier in terms of ideas about both reconciliation and rights during this process, the organisations ideas about what the mandate should *not* include may have influence the final mandate. This was specifically concerning what the mandate should include about rights and the two groups different legal status. The changes from the draft mandates to the final mandate has been problematised, as there were two sentences concerning rights and the different legal status of the groups which was scrapped.

It is pertinent in this conclusion to reflect somewhat on the possible reasons for why this happened. The removal was a direct request from the KLF; however, it is difficult to say anything about the Presidium's process here. Was it changed because some of these ideas were conflicting, thus the Presidium made the choice to keep the mandate general? Or did the Presidium realise that if the mandate promised too much in the first two draft mandates, concluding that the expectation from the relevant communities for measures as a result of the TRC would be too high? In not including any promises in the mandate that the measures for reconciliation should concern rights, Presidium and in turn the Norwegian Parliament safeguarded the political status quo.

Lastly, the TRC hearing was examined to trace if there were any changes to the ideas about reconciliation from the Sámi Parliament or the Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations from 2018 to 2023. The findings of the suggested that KFR and the Sámi Parliaments ideas concerning reconciliation have not undergone significant change from the mandate consultation process in 2018 to the contributions to the hearing in 2023. However, the hearing indicated that the NKF has away from viewing reconciliation from a national minority perspective in 2018, to in 2023 having ideas which are more similar to the KFR. In viewing the possibilities for reconciliation depending on recognition as an original people of the Northern Calotte, and a demand for a higher level of rights, more similar to that of the Sámi, with a focus on co-determination. The suggestions from 2023 have additionally highlighted that all three key actors are in a relationship with the Norwegian authorities that, for a diverse number of reasons, can best be described as a relationship of mistrust at the moment. Leaving the possibilities of a reconciliation process commencing from the final report in a tenuous space.

In summary, the mandate ended up being broad and open ended, leaving much up to the TRC itself. It has been shown that the mandate focuses largely on broader themes such as language and culture, which in turn also shows that specific ideas suggested by the actors invited to consult was not reflected in the mandate. Despite specific suggestions on ideas

about reconciliation, as shown in the VDP-triads, being presented to the Presidium during the consultation process, the final mandate was unspecific in terms of defining reconciliation beyond ambiguous ideas about a common understanding and recognition of the past, and measures for the future with a focus on promoting language and culture.

Thus, what the term reconciliation in the context of the Norwegian context will comprise of, will not become apparent before the TRC submits its final report accompanied with proposals for measures for continued reconciliation. One conclusion that can be made from the findings from this thesis, however, is that both in 2018 and in 2023 these key actors had both broad and specific ideas about what reconciliation could mean, and equivalently the expectations for the reconciliation measures. I argue that the different ideas and idea systems about reconciliation identified in this thesis can be a useful foundation from which to discuss the final report and proposed measures when they are submitted on June 1st, 2023. Hopefully the findings from this thesis may be utilised when further research commences on the TRC and its final report.

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